

THE  
BEWILDERED QUERISTS  
AND OTHER NONSENSE.

BY  
FRANCIS BLAKE CROFTON.

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MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
METROPOLITAN SOCIETY  
OF  
BEWILDERED QUERISTS.

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INTRODUCTORY.

THIS famous association was founded by a few enthusiastic dilettanti at a preliminary meeting held by them at the residence of Alexander Ridley, Esq., who officiated as temporary chairman. Professor Erasmus A. Pundit thus briefly explained the objects and ends of the proposed organization :—

“LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

There are certain persons of extraordinary mental endowments who, without laying claim to greatness

in any particular art or science, have yet distributed their genius throughout the whole domain of human thought. Without confining their adoration invidiously to any particular Muse, they worship impartially at the altars of the Nine. For their aspiring souls the drudgery of detail has been so uncongenial that they have relied largely upon happy inspirations, denied to the many, as substitutes for the crude elements of erudition. With soaring intellects they have sought to grasp the sublimest truths of every science, and, scorning the beaten paths, to explore the forest of knowledge simultaneously on every side. These diffusive enthusiasts are like noble trees that branch out in all directions to catch the sunshine and the breeze, not sending out their arms only to the north to span the stream, nor stretching only to the south to shade the dusty path, not reaching only heavenwards to approach the sun, nor only straining downwards to pierce the earth's crust. In such devious explorations they have gathered many strictly priceless gems, but the value of these, owing to the jealousy of specialists as well as to the habitual modesty of us amateurs, has not yet been generally recognized. It has therefore long been a desideratum that the unappreciated geniuses of this metropolis should form a literary order, which should at the same time

be a medium of communication among themselves and afford a means of conveying miscellaneous truths to the outside public.

Under these circumstances, Mr. Chairman, I move :

1. That the ladies and gentlemen here present do constitute and style themselves a 'Society for the Promotion of General Knowledge.'

2. That the proceedings of the association be untrammelled by any parliamentary rules or precedents.

3. That the sense of the Beautiful and the Seemly inherent in the members be the sole arbiter as to the subjects and manner of discussion.

4. That the limitless scope of our Society be expressed by assuming the motto, 'Quidquid agunt homines.'

5. That weekly meetings be held at the houses of members in rotation."

A modest personage took exception to the proposed title and motto. Referring to the fact that the merits of the gentlemen assembled had been hitherto strangely unrecognized by the public, he begged to suggest Gray's lines about the flower which "wastes its sweetness on the desert air," and recommended as a fitter designation, "The Society of Hidden Genius."

Miss Taack, a lady distantly related to the late

Mrs. Malaprop, preferred "Blatant Talent," as shorter and equally appropriate.

Benjamin Franklin Muggs, Esq., differed from the last speakers, thinking it extremely inadvisable to parade in the teeth of the public its shockingly bad taste. He believed in push and self-assertion. Ordinary people were very likely to take societies as well as individuals at their own advertised estimates of themselves. It was absolutely necessary, in his opinion, to lease apartments in Fifth Avenue, and he thought it would be desirable to emblazon on the door some undecipherable Chaldee or Cuneiform motto, surmounted by a crest. In regard to the latter he hesitated between a neat variation on the ever-popular American Eagle and an original design of some newly-invented antediluvian Saurian—care being taken, of course, that it should be the biggest thing out in that peculiar line. The title, too, should be bold and sonorous. Perhaps the Excelsior "Union of Universal Commentators," or "Galaxy of Great Guns," would do.

The President objected that great guns were too often large bores, and was supported by Miss Taack, who avowed herself wholly opposed to "heavy ordinances." It also transpired that two-thirds of the

persons present were already enrolled in "Excelsior" clubs.

Mr. Muggs explained that his proposals were merely tentative. He was perfectly willing that they should style themselves Tip-Toppers, Thus Fars, or NonPlus Ultras. In fact, he thought one of his suggestions quite as good as another. Of the last appellation, however, Miss Taack would not even hear. "I *was* aware," remonstrated she, "that the views of some of us were considered rather radical and advanced; but I was *not* aware that anybody, much less one of ourselves, could look upon us as non-plussed ultras!"

Driven from his first positions, the irrepressible Mr. Muggs now counselled adopting the phraseology of trade, in deference to the commercial sentiment of the age. The association, he said, might be happily termed an exchange. Its end being the propagation of miscellaneous knowledge, as well as the solution of miscellaneous doubts, many ideas would naturally be borrowed, notes of interrogation would be circulated, and doubtless a paper medium of exchange would be occasionally resorted to. He accordingly thought a most appropriate name would be "The Yankee Notion Exchange."

Professor Pundit hoped indeed that much that was

capital and many sterling remarks would be current at their meetings, but he nevertheless objected on principle to creating any factitious public interest about the society. In his opinion it should stand entirely upon its merits.

To this protest Miss Taack added hers, on the ground that "a mercantile designation was belittling to a body actuated by high aims and perspirations towards the infinite."

After many amendments had been successively negatived, the chairman said :

*"Ladies and Gentlemen :*

With the exuberant suggestiveness which marks certain of our members, there appears to be some danger lest the details of organization may consume an undue proportion of our time. For these matters, though first in order, are of very minor importance, when compared with the momentous and interesting topics which may naturally be expected to occupy the attention of a Historico-musico-physico-ethico-technico-catholico-mythico-archæological association. It is clear that without mutual concessions we shall never possess a constitution or a name, unless indeed it be the 'Order of Perplexed Commentators,' or 'Bewildered Querists.'"

"Querists is a mighty neat term," observed Mr.

O'Callahan, an Irish gentleman, "highly applicable, short, and inexpressive ; but common 'tatures are like to stick in one's throat, owing to their great size, and the same may be said of commentators. It's proud we should be to belong to a body with a name big enough for the Long Parliament, and obliged we are to our Chairman for the compliment ; but if the proceedings are to be carried on in Greek, I move that we subscribe for a *Webster*."

"The Metropolitan Society of Bewildered Querists" was the title eventually agreed upon, and, a spirit of compromise having arisen, it was determined to dispense altogether with a motto. With these exceptions the original resolutions of Professor Pundit were passed. On the motion of a Querist, Mr. Ridley was appointed permanent President, and the following substituted for the fourth article of the constitution :

"4. That the debating be strictly extemporaneous ; and that only one paper be admissible at each meeting, the subject of such paper to be secretly communicated by its author to the presiding officer, and announced by the latter to the Querists at the opening of the session."



## SESSION I.

THE President, in introducing Miss Taack as the essayist of the evening, ventured to anticipate that, though "Cremation" was from its nature a dry topic, her admirable style would invest it with factitious charms.

After modestly disclaiming "the capabilities so flatteringly imputed to her as a writer of fiction," the lady spoke as follows :

*" My Fellow Querists :*

I am not one of those vehement preservatives who, because a thing is new, proceed to apply opprobrious epitaphs to its authors, or, as some do, to denounce its partisans with fearful implications. But with the individuals who want to blot out of existence our lovely suburban symmetries, and by means of fire to 'sweep the lines where beauty lingers' and rudely destroy the statuesque cemetery of the lifeless features—with these I have no patience whatever. Such a 'reform' I consider nothing less than a burning shame! To object, indeed, to costly coffins and ostentatious sepulchres, and to favor a cheaper method of dispos-

ing of our dead, may be pardoned as a venal fault ; but to make chimney ornaments of our fathers' ashes, and incongruously to wreath with flowers their charred remnants, I regard as a fragrant offence against decency and taste. They argue that it is unfair to condemn an untried system. But, Mr. President, I have had an extensive experience in cremation upon various Fourth's of July. I have seen fifteen boys' fingers, three boys' eyes, several female garments, and one complete old lady cremated upon two of those glorious anniversaries. On the latter of these occasions, as I returned home half cracked by crackers, torpid with torpedoes, and bruised by caterpillars in the hands of youthful desperadoes, I registered a vow against incineration.

One might think, from the way people talk, that it was something original ; and yet thousands of years before Brown and Thompson, the devil had adopted cremation in theory and practice. This heathenish custom, it is true, is more immediately borrowed from pagan Greece and Rome, and from Hindostan, where they burn upon the funeral pyres of married men the shrieking relics of the dead ! ”

The Professor craved permission to observe that the pagan process of burning bodies was very inferior to that which modern science rendered practicable.

The former never thoroughly consumed the bones ; whence the ancient proverb, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

“ I suppose,” resumed the fair Querist, “ they’ll be wanting us to change our language as well as our habits. Our years will have to be dated A.C., in the year of cremation ; and ‘ from creation to cremation ’ will serve instead of ‘ from the cradle to the grave.’ We may also expect some lovely elegies in the future—something in the following style, perhaps, for of course, when grave-diggers are succeeded by pyre-lighters, the grave laments of yore will be replaced by lighter melodies :

‘ Above yon mantel, in the new screen’s shade,  
Where smokes the coal in one dull smouldering heap,  
Each in his patent urn forever laid,  
The baked residua of our fathers sleep.

‘ The wheezy call of muffins in the morn,  
The milkman tittering from his rusty sled,  
The help’s shrill clarion, or the fishman’s horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lofty bed.

‘ For them no more the blazing fire-grate burns,  
Or busy housewife fries her savory soles,  
Though children run to clasp their sires’ red urns,  
And roll them in a family game of bowls.

'Perhaps in this deserted pot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with terrestrial fire,  
Hands that the rod paternal may have swayed,  
And waked to \* ecstasy the living liar.'

I do declare that sometimes, when I think of these men and their silly notions, my lips involuntarily curl in a contemptible smile. I cannot help suspecting that some business interest prompts their opposition to the Christian system of inhumanity. The charges for burial plots and monuments are indeed exorbitant. A friend of mine paid two or three thousand dollars to erect a single lot."

The Professor presumed that the fair speaker meant a statue or a monument, as one could hardly talk of "erecting" the soil.

Miss Taack—"Perhaps I may have misunderstood the term, for I always supposed the white statues in graveyards *were* the 'lots,' being emblematical of Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt. This design appeared to me singularly poetical in consequence of the inclination of dying persons to 'cast one longing, lingering look behind.' But whatever they are made of, high-priced lots are certainly

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\* "Ecstasy—overwhelming excitement."—*Webster*.

grounds for reasonable complaint. This, however, is not enough to recommend the odious alternative which has been proposed ; and which, I repeat my belief, has been suggested by an interested antagonism to the undertaking and mourning establishments, to the 'decent hearse' and 'custom-made suits of solemn black,' to quote the expressive words of Shakspeare. This suspicion, Mr. President, rouses my virtuous indignation and suffuses my cheeks with 'the blushes of ingenious shame,' as the poet so aptly expresses it. Especially when I reflect that the miserable incendiaries, while they chatter about sanitary reform and ascetics, are in reality undermining the doctrines of the resurrection and the immorality of the soul!" (*Applause.*)

Mr. Muggs cordially indorsed the sentiments of the eloquent lady : for his part he was always opposed to "robbing the poor man of his bier."

The President observed that it was merely a matter of taste. Personally, he preferred smoking to the bier. Perhaps it might soothe the lady's indignation to reflect that in questions of change mercenary considerations were inevitable.

O'Callahan averred that he had no ambition to sleep with his forefathers before his time, as he would have to when cremation became the fashion, unless

his landlady would like to have their urns in the parlor. The innovation would be destructive of affection for the dead. How could a widow talk of the "dear departed," when his incineration only cost five dollars and a half?

The President deprecated giving a sentimental turn to the discussion. "Nevertheless," said he, "I cannot refrain from observing that I should like, when I have passed away, like a withered rose, to 'lie *scentless* and dead.' Besides,

'E'en from the grave the voice of Nature cries,  
'E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires;'

and, as my disposition is not an ungrateful one, it is natural that I should desire a grate-full end."

Muggs remarked that the sacred urn might become a very handy receptacle for "stolen waters," in a teetotal family. The "fence" of the future likewise would probably be surrounded by a numerous ancestry. However, in the variety of opinions existing among the Querists, he moved that the meeting be dissolved, "as the question could not fail to be settled after dissolution."

As the Society was breaking up, a member played the Dead March in *Saul* on the piano, which occa-

sioned the Professor to suggest that, as Saul was also called Paul, this funeral melody might more appropriately have been termed the Dead March in *Pall*.

## SESSION II.

THE meeting, being duly called to order, received with some emotion the announcement of its worthy President that the warm debate upon cremation would on the present occasion be succeeded by the more humid theme of "Drinks." Many of the members had become quite excited over the subject, among whom was the orator himself, B. F. Muggs, Esq.

Raising to his lips a liquid bearing a delusive resemblance to water, Mr. Muggs commenced with a confidence engendered by a familiar acquaintance with the matter in hand :

"MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

The moral effect of generous drinks in developing the virtue of candor has been recorded in the well-known proverb, 'In vino veritas.' On the other hand the use of undiluted water tends notoriously to encourage lying and deceit, for it is a melancholy fact that even 'Truth *lies* in a well !' Wine likewise creates ideas and fluency of speech, and stimu-



lates the imagination. As Horace has pointed out, all great poets have been tipplers. Indeed in their sublimest flights they largely use the figure of speech entitled hyperbole, which is derived—if my memory serves me right—from two Greek words, *hyper*, over, and *bole*, a bowl. On this point, however, I am open to correction by our learned associate, Professor Pundit."

*(The Professor, who spoke with seeming hesitation, was understood to say that he coincided, on this etymological question, with the lucid exposition of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, to recapitulate which, of course, would only be to insult the intelligence of a learned body.)*

"The material influence of alcoholic drinks," resumed Mr. Muggs, "is still more beneficial. If there is one thing more necessary than another to preserve the prosperity of New York and our other great commercial centres, that thing, the papers assure us, is the increase of grain elevators. Now what *grain elevators*, I should like to hear, are more speedy in their operation or more efficacious than malt and rye whiskies? They may brag of the longevity induced by water-drinking. But give me a hale and stout old age that goes down with undiminished spirits to the bier. Alcohol is the best known remedy

for various afflictions, including hydrophobia and the bites of snakes—not that I go so far as the ‘Jolly Postboys,’ who claimed it to be an antidote against the Old Serpent himself :

‘ Whisky is the surest  
Curer of evil,  
And at the end of life  
Will save us from the devil.’

It certainly *is* a sovereign counteractive to that particular variety of bad spirits commonly denominated ‘the blue devils.’ No one, I fancy, will venture to deny that *still* waters are the best preventive of sea-sickness.

Taken in excess, stimulants are doubtless injurious; but so are candies, tea and ice. In fact the baneful abuse of the last commodity, especially when used soon after hot viands or drinks, merits the interference of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Tea destroys the nerves and indirectly multiplies scandals; while tobacco, with all deference to our genial President, is the cause that so many of our youths go to weeds. Yet no one therefore wishes to stop a moderate indulgence in these luxuries.

I want to observe that I am wholly unprejudiced against water. I find it extremely convenient to

wash in, and I own that it is very useful in manufactures, *e.g.*, brewing and distilling. For aught that I know to the contrary, it may even be palatable as a drink. It is true that I disapprove of mixing it with liquors, knowing how grave a responsibility is involved in the dilution ; for it is manifest that when spirits have lost their body they become disembodied spirits ! Why, then, while I concede the merits of their beverage, do prohibitionists remain blind to the virtues of mine ? When I grant them the unlimited enjoyment of *their* favorite water and milk, why do they refuse me a limited indulgence in *my* favorite gin and bitters ? Deny it as they may, they are actuated by an unchristian spirit of bitter persecution.

I am unable to discover any sweeping scriptural prohibition of wine ; and whiskey, rum and brandy are not even alluded to by the inspired writers, many of whom—it is important to recollect—were prophets. On the other hand, some commentators trace the fall of the first man to the demoralizing influence of total abstinence. In support of this position they urge the fact that water was Adam's <sup>only</sup> ale ; while Noah, the introducer of the vine, was singled out for preservation from the Deluge. The publicans of the Christian era, too, are favorably contrasted with the Pharisees, who correspond to the temperance fanatics of to-day."

*(Cries of "Order! order!" amid which a Querist begged to remind the speaker that the publicans of that age were a totally different class from modern public-house keepers.)*

"The member's correction was unneeded," Muggs continued with severity: "ignorant as I may be, I was not unaware of that distinction. The spread of civilization, I know, has made the American bar very unlike its Judæan prototype. Slings, smashes, eye-openers, and all iced innovations, were of course wanting in the latter. Indeed there is reason to believe that mixed concoctions were wholly unknown to ancient Hebrew gentlemen, with the single exception that they were commonly addicted to julips, as may be inferred from bas-reliefs of the period. The points of resemblance, which I had in view when I was interrupted, between Pharisees and teetotalers are their self-complacency and public prayers. A war of words between tipplers and praying bands reminds me of that historical combat, the eve of which the English spent in supplication and the French in revelry. 'Treaters and Entreaters,' or 'The Battle of A-Gin-Court,' would make a lovely title for a tract, wherein to sound the praises of Good Templars and errant damosels."

The President failed to discern the moral and

material advantages claimed for ardent liquors. If the gentleman's reproach *were* true, that tobacco sent young men gradually to weeds, it could be said with equal truth that drunkenness made *its* votaries go rapidly to pot. To the frequent occurrence of *delirium tremens* he attributed the d-t-rioration of the human race. It was noteworthy that rabid dogs abandoned water and took to wine; and he viewed the first sips of this alluring liquid as signs of incipient insanity in men. At the same time he admitted that the uncompromising disposition of teetotalers was injurious to their cause, although it was not unnatural that their antipathy to cordials should be a cordial detestation. Intemperance, he felt sure, would be more effectually checked by social ostracism than by legislative prohibitio. or praying bands. Those loose characters who were habitually tight should be excluded from every respectable circle.

Miss Taack also wished to make a few remarks on what she called "the fluid but pernicious speech of Mr. Muggs." In her opinion one of the greatest nuisances connected with taverns was the crowds of leering loafers who infested their doors. It often required a bold woman to run the gauntlet of gamblers, politicians and vulgar spendthrifts, with their wonted retinue of purseless parricides, tittering at

their jokes. Spirits she considered were injurious at the best; but those which were permitted to be sold were simply murderous. What was commonly retailed as brandy was, as she was creditably informed, nothing more than colored alcohol and water, deluded with vitriol to increase its strength. No fraud was more execrable than "the palming off of these impure mixtures and adulterous compounds."

Here O'Callahan, noticing what he stigmatized as "impolite exhibitions of suppressed mirth," whispered to a neighbor that the offence undeniably *was* committed in the spirit!

The Querist addressed answered ungallantly that ladies who wielded too heavy weapons were always liable to wound themselves.

At this imputation, which unfortunately reached her ears, Miss Taack fired up. She protested that she had no preference for lengthy words, if that was what the gentleman meant. Errors she might make; but at least she "*tried* to use the plainest and most idiotic English."

Mr. Muggs moved an adjournment, remarking that it was growing unconscionably late. Considering the hour, he thought a treatment of the Querists preferable to any further treatment of the subject.

This resolution being unanimously carried, Muggs led a majority of the members on the broad path which conducted to a contiguous sample-room, where he alarmed his victims with the following conundrum:

"Why is a rabid clown like a glass of bottled beer?"

*Answer of audience, suffering from hope deferred:*

"Give it up."

*Answer to conundrum:*

"Because he's a foaming tumbler!"

*Effect upon the crowd*—Big drinks.

*Moral for publicans:* Discourage riddles *before* drinks.

## SESSION III.

## MOTTOES AND SAWS.

THIS short session was mainly occupied by anecdotes narrated by Miss Taack, which are here reported verbatim:

## "FELLOW QUERISTS:

Certain circumstances have lately come under my notice which have revolutionized my feelings on the subject of mottoes, and made me regard them as a dilution and a snare. I am acquainted with a woman who keeps one of those human exchanges which some one with bitter irony has named intelligence offices. This lady informed me of her design to embellish her shop-front with a motto. I ventured to suggest 'Excelsior' as peculiarly appropriate, having learned from the Professor that the word meant 'hire.' Shortly after she had adopted my suggestion I had occasion to visit the office again, and was told by the proprietress that the business had fallen off in some incomprehensive



manner, it having got abroad that she had raised her fees or was encouraging help to ask for higher terms.

The other day I assisted at the birth of an Early Rising Association. The question of a motto was the very first that came up. Some one proposed 'The early bird catches the worm.' But one of the members sensibly observed that unfeathered bipeds could unfortunately catch the worms without early rising. 'Let us then be *up*,' recommended an admirer of Longfellow.

'And *doing*,' added a fraudulent looking member.

'With a heart for any *fête*,' said a gay votary of fashion.

'With a *hart* for any *fite*,' echoed a lover of venison.

'*Still* achieving,' said a gentleman interested in the manufacture of stills.

'*Still* pursuing,' put in a revenue policeman.

'Learn to labor and to *wait*,' said an honest footman.

'And to *wait*,' chimed in an indolent member.

By this time I became convinced that, what with the cunning of their adopters, and the double intenders of their authors, mottoes were capable of changing their hues like camelopards. And I have come

to almost the same conclusion about quotations of every sort.

There was my great-grandfather who suffered twice from his veneration for Shakespeare. He once refused a baronetcy, so penetrated was he by the King's despair in *Hamlet*, when he remorsefully exclaims, 'Oh, my offence is *rank!*' I suppose you are aware that my ancestor was a believer in the emigration of souls. He held that our spirit successively went through the whole scale of quadrupeds. During a warm discussion on the subject he wagered a hundred pounds that W. Shakespeare shared his belief. This he endeavored to prove by pointing out that the poet makes Hamlet observe that the dreamy state following death 'must give us *paws*,' and that in alluding to deceased persons the dramatist more than once uses the remarkable expression, 'and thereby hangs a tail.' But on reference it was found that the author in his ignorance had misspelt the words; and my great-grandfather lost the stakes because Bacon had not written Shakespeare. But what can we expect from a fellow who could not spell his own name! Other members of our family have been similarly misled by grave authorities. My uncle, a missionary on the west coast of Africa, died of a text. While flying from a zebra, which happened to be at

the same time flying from him, he fearlessly advanced to within a few yards of a family of leopards, having full faith in the scriptural assurance that the leopards could not change their spots. But they did; and what was more unpleasant, they 'knocked spots' out of him."

Mr. Muggs felicitated the lady on her great-grandfather's declension of the baronetcy. For his own part he thought the title of a gentleman fully equivalent to a peerage. As for the importance which the benighted British attached to the petty style of baronet, it was simply surprising.

Miss Taack said she was herself opposed to obsolete monarchy and indeed to the enjoyment of special amenities by any class; but she owned a weakness for the sound of "Lady Taack."

A member remarked that a baronetage in the family would hardly make her a titled lady.

Muggs perceived the Querist was unaware that all invidious distinctions between aristocrats had been abolished by the American weekly romancists, who ought to be the best authorities on the subject, judging from their apparent familiarity with people of rank. According to these popular writers, the daughter of a baronet had as good a right to be Lady Honoria or Lady Esmeralda as the daughter of a duke.

Mr. O'Callahan boldly avowed himself an aristocrat, as became one of the numerous descendants of Brian Boru. He liked to see the old Milesian titles kept up—The O'Donohue, The O'Grady, The O'Callahan, and The Devil. He himself used always to assert his right to the ancestral prefix, which he had printed on his cards ; but soon after his arrival in this country he was constrained by a second-hand insult to abandon the style. A low-lived Irish Yankee, named Pat O'Callahan, had left a card upon him bearing the inscription, "The other O'Callahan !" Such radicals, he was glad to say, were generally no-torious characters.

Miss Taack expressed her pleasure at discovering that The. Tilton was a nobleman ; and thus ended the Third Session.

## SESSION IV.

THE President said that no Querist had expressed an intention of addressing the meeting, and he would therefore take this opportunity to bring before the Society an important MS., discovered by him, during a recent Italian tour, at the town of Assisi. In deciphering its blurred and illegible characters he was greatly indebted to the kind assistance of their learned confrère, Prof. Pundit. The lucubration, he was sorry to say, was incomplete, being only a

FRAGMENT OF A MEDIÆVAL MIRACLE  
PLAY.

Ascribed to St. Francis d'Assisi.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.—BALAAM AND HIS ASS.

*Enter Balaam on ass-back. Tents of Ascalon in the background.*

BALAAM (*beating his donkey*). "Will you go on?"

ASS (*kicking*). "Will you go off?"

BAL. "By the holy Moses, no!"

ASS (*looking askance*). "Let your nay be nay."

BAL. (*astounded at his assurance*). "Let your nay be bray. Speak to your associates."

ASS. "Cease to assimilate yourself to us."

*Here Balaam on the SPUR of the moment commits an assault.*

ASS "Ha! assaults and damages! Recollect the assizes and Old Bailey."

BAL. (*pulling the curb*). "How do you like that?"

ASS. "Not a bit."

BAL. (*plying his spurs*). "No longer shall I be a standing joke."

ASS (*satirically*). "Why not rather try the power of moving speeches?"

BAL. (*spurring assiduously*). "Ha! you mock me!"

ASS. (*with asperity*). "Ungodly man, pause ere you become an assassin."

BAL. (*with unbridled wrath*). "Nay, if you be a spirit, I'll try a better means of communicating with you. (*Beats him.*) How's that for spirit-rapping?"

ASS (*throwing his rider*). "How's that for table-turning?"

---

*The donkey gains a complete ascendancy. Exit Balaam in a fit of asthma. \* \* \* \* \**

---

The MS. here concludes with asterisks.

The Professor opined that the donkey showed such a marked superiority in his asides that the prophet must have felt quite ashamed.

Muggs always considered the ass a mean and fractious creature which would never assent to reason. When you say 'go!' he goes not, and when you say 'wo!' he won't. He believed in treating them homœopathically—when they stick, apply the stick. A friend of his realized a thousand dollars by backing an obstinate donkey against another equally cantankerous. He turned the beast's hind-quarters to the goal and flogged steadily. He made the mile in fifty minutes, distancing his competitor.

The Professor suggested that this obstinacy might often be due to the cruelty of riders. He had known donkeys quite "bowed down with weight of wo!"

In reply to an inquiry the President explained that the original was written in Leonine verse; and after some further discussion the meeting adjourned.

## SESSION V.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN," observed the President in opening the proceedings, "Mr. Pundit had purposed introducing an important and vexed question at our present meeting. But perceiving an exceptionally large muster of classical members, he has acted upon my advice, and, deferring to a future occasion his remarks upon the subject alluded to, will take this favorable opportunity of submitting to your criticism an academical paper which marks a new and progressive era in Collegiate education."

Whereupon, the President having duly rapped for silence, Professor Pundit proceeded to read, amid the rapt attention of the Querists, the following examination paper:

## ABNORMAL COLLEGE.

## CLASSICAL EXAMINATION OF FRESHMEN,\*

April 1st, 1874.

## I. Did the myth of Jupiter's descent in a shower of

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\* Some of these questions were published in the *Round Table*, as "a melancholy evidence of the effects of prolonged classical training upon a vigorous and creative intellect!"



gold, originate in the fact of his being a reigning sovereign?

II. (a) Did Achilles after his immersion in the Styx originate the phrase "no heel-taps?" (b) Explode the paradox that his wound "on the heal" could not be cured.

III. Refute the theory that the smoke of Mount *Ætna* proceeded from the briar-root of *Briareus* confined there.

IV. (a) May a lady's trunk be compared with the Vocative because it is the case of a dress? (b) Prove the identity of a Christmas box with the Dative Case.

V. Does Virgil's phrase, "*ficto pectore fatur*," establish the fact that the ancients had anticipated one of the modern fashions? In this connection also examine the expression addressed to the Queen of Beauty, "*Quid natum falsis ludis imaginibus*"—*Why do you mock your son with false forms?*

VI. If Julius Agricola in his invasion of Caledonia penetrated to Forfar, did he go *twice two far*?

VII. Construe the words of the *Æneid*, "*Heu, mis-*

erande puer!" and show that the rendering, "A lass, unhappy lad!" is no less objectionable than "Hugh, you wretched boy!"

VIII. Can the legend of the birth of Castor and Pollux from an egg be correctly termed a Lay of Ancient Greece?

IX. May the unprofitableness of literature among the Romans be inferred from the statement of Sallust and other writers, that they did not possess the price of admission to the Opera (*non operæ pretium est*)? Or is the phrase only a delicate mode of "putting in" for "dead-head" tickets?

X. Are we to suppose that vegetable as well as animal life was suspended in the realms of Pluto? Is the supposition warranted by Virgil's allusion to "*lucos Stygis*," *groves of sticks*?

XI. Does the fervent exclamation of Anna, "*O luce magis dilecta sorori*," show that she loved Dido more than her other sister Lucy?

XII. Who was the tall general referred to by the poet in the following lines—

"The kites know well the *long stern Swell*  
That bids the Romans close"?

XIII. Is the existence of a financial crisis in Olympus to be presumed from Juno's going to Æolus to "raise the wind?" Would the advances made by the King of the Winds naturally take the shape of inflated currency or some other circulating medium?

XIV. Show by etymological deduction that the tale of the founding of Rome was merely a sailor's yarn, giving its due importance to the fact that Remus meant an *oar*, coupled with the manifest derivation of *Row-mulus*.

Does this satisfactorily account for the celebrated row between the brothers?

Miss Taack complimented the Professor upon his searching and suggestive paper. "What an inestimable benefit," she went on to say, "the undergraduates of the Abnormal College must enjoy, whose labors are persecuted under such capable direction! For me entomology has always had a peculiar fascination. What wondrous moral truths we gather from the study of words! By it we corroborate our belief that the *wicked* will be lighted at the last, and that *cincération* is the natural process for disposing of the remains of sinners. Physical and historical facts also are often strangely proved by derivations. In my

school days I was taught the interesting coincidence that the Greek verb *ao*, to breathe, was compounded of *a* and *o*, embodying the fact that breath is the alpha and omega of human existence. With what honest pride did I discover that the intellectual supremacy of my native city was verified by the meaning of its name—Boston, the boss-town! On the other hand the degrading descent of the Aryan race, now the noblest family of mankind, is too plainly proved by its humiliating derivation, *hairy 'un!*”

The fair Querist paused with visible emotion.

“And with what edification,” she presentiy resumed, “I listened to a self-educated Cockney divine exposing the entomological baseness of Satan! ‘Not only,’ said the learned preacher, ‘do his Greek names signify *Slanderer* and *Destroyer*, but his common English appellation is the vilest word in our language. Complete, it is the *devil*; diminished by a letter, it becomes *evil*; by two, it appears as *vil(e)*; by three, it leaves us *il(l)*; by four, and it is ‘*ell!*’ And the imaginative minister, perhaps mistaking his pulpit for the whole word and having faith in the text which counsels resistance, concluded his display of superlative philology with an edifying exhibition of muscular Christianity.”

Muggs agreed with the lady and Archbishop Trench

that some very important truths were contained in words. *Luscious*, for example, as he begged to inform teetotalers, was derived from "lush." He could vouch for the correctness of this etymology, for he was very familiar with the root. And this suggestive derivation reminded him that the session had been protracted to a degree that would have distressed a certain estimable Governor of North Carolina, justly famed for a short and pithy speech.

The member hereupon moving to adjourn, the Society unanimously carried out the motion.

## SESSION VI.

“ ‘To beat or not to beat, that is the question’ of the evening,” announced the President, assuming the insignia of office. “The quotation is not exact to a *t*, but I flatter myself that it is more striking than the original. I shall now leave my friend the Professor, to continue the soliloquy. The learned Querist had hoped to present an illustrated lecture, but was singularly unsuccessful in securing a *corpus vile*, or recipient, for his illustrations.”

With the alacrity of one entering upon a congenial subject, the Professor took the floor and said :

“MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

My subject may be conveniently divided into four heads : (1) the persons to flog, (2) the persons to be flogged, (3) the instruments with which to flog, (4) and lastly the advisability of flogging. In this arrangement it will be observed that I have followed the example of that impulsive judge who was wont to hang first and try afterwards. In the correction of youth I have found this a most effective mode of pro-

cedure. Investigate the offence *before* the flogging, and the culprit will think of a hundred perplexing fallacies; 'necessity is the mother of invention.' Investigate the offence *after* the flogging, and the delinquent, having nothing now to fear, will usually make an open confession, always provided that he has anything to confess. If it should happen to be otherwise, my usual course is to credit the youth with one caning in advance, and dismiss him with full forgiveness for all the mental agitation he has caused me—for, so far as the bodily exertion goes, it is a healthy and exhilarating exercise.

And this leads me to the first division of my subject. The wielder of the rod should be endowed with peculiar moral and physical gifts. The slightest indication of hilarity on his part will destroy the moral effect, which on the contrary is often enhanced by earnest protestations of 'the sorrow with which he executes his painful duty.' He should remember also to make the concluding strokes the most severe. In fact the philosophic flagellant should imitate the principle of an oratorical climax, which should grow stronger and more impressive at each stage, for what may be in itself capable of thrilling the intellect or the nerves loses its efficacy when succeeding a more powerful shock. A good knowledge of human anatomy

and an accurate ear for sound are valuable qualifications in applying the *argumentum a posteriori*, for some boys have extensive wardrobes and a fair idea of fortification. Nor is a cross-eye without its uses to the castigator; for it is often highly indiscreet to look directly at your objective point, and an unguarded glance at the thumb-joint or the nails of the floggee is almost invariably followed by a flinch. To all these natural advantages a good wind' is a desirable adjunct, particularly during perverse exhibitions of youthful agility. At the same time it is important that the pursuit be always conducted in good order; nor can I approve the spectacle of a learned preceptor wading streams or climbing trees in a probably ineffectual chase. Finally, the rod should not be permitted to the young, the weak, or the ungoverned: not to the young, for it is symbolic of parental authority; not to the weak, lest they learn by experience that to bear is not synonymous with to carry; not to the ungoverned, lest they use it capriciously, or yield to a passion for variety—like Squeers in the story, who could not resist the charm of thrashing a boy in a cab."

The President begged leave to suggest the desirability of delegating the painful task to salaried experts. A corps of corpulent corporals, after a proper



course of correction, might inflict corporal punishment in every sense of the term.

A Querist thought it would be a refinement of barbarity thus to wound the sensibilities simultaneously with the senses. The sons of Mars should only wield their weapons in the wars.

Another member : “ *Punic wars* ? ”

This act of hardihood having been duly rebuked by groans, Prof. Pundit explained that he could never countenance the withdrawal of the ferule from the hands of responsible preceptors. Some of them doubtless were badly qualified for its exercise. Indeed one pedagogue had owned to him an overmastering desire to “pandy” with his walking-stick the outstretched palms of a certain blind beggar, which the latter was wont to present to passers-by in a most convenient and alluring manner. But the instincts of amateurs, he believed, were still more frequently cruel. One of his own earliest recollections was being spanked under false pretences by a sister only slightly his senior. Before he was four years old, she had approached him with a countenance more in sorrow than in anger, and sophistically persuaded him, first, that he had just committed a mortal sin in eating too much dinner, and, secondly, that it was her painful duty to give, and his painful duty to

receive a whipping—which whipping was gravely inflicted behind a curtain in a most impressive and humiliating mode. A favorite pastime of a beautiful living member of the English aristocracy was to tie a spoon-bait to the leg of a duck and let it loose in a lake swarming with pike, and, when one of these had hooked itself, to watch the struggle of the fish to drown the bird and of the bird to land the fish. The narration of this last fact might perhaps seem out of place; but it was not really so, for a cruel substitute for the flogging-rod was quite as much to be expected from amateurs as a cruel substitute for the fishing-rod. A mythical tyrant has been credited with a very ingenious experiment in flagellation, which was, like the nightingale, “most musical and melancholy.” One morning after breakfast, while regaling himself as usual by witnessing the administration of the bastinado, he was forcibly struck by the variety of tone developed in the groans of different victims. An idea flashed upon him to select eight criminals whose invariable custom it was to moan promptly on the receipt of each lash, and whose moans should be found to form a complete octave. On this human harp he purposed to practise simple airs. He expected, he said, by skilful whaling to elicit wailing melodies, and to play sole-stirring tunes upon the malefactors’

feet. The prolongation of the note could possibly be regulated by the violence of the blow, and he hoped eventually to succeed in striking quavers, crotchets, minims and semibreves at will. Accordingly various arrangements of the convicts were tried, but none produced a faultless scale; whereupon some of the spectators having been seized and pressed into the service, a perfect gamut was at length obtained. A few bars were played with gratifying success, and the despot was facetiously congratulating himself upon his "musical feet," when it was found that the vocal instrument was extremely liable to being knocked out of tune, a note, when struck the third or fourth time, often responding in an unexpected key. Thus the inventive tyrant, failing to detect the principle which underlay this mutability of tone, was forced to abandon his musical experiment, and content himself with the bare discovery of foot-notes. Were his system ever to be perfected and introduced into our schools, the instructor could convert eight liars into a compound whole, and, in one sense more than Gray's *Bard*,

"With a master's hand and prophet's fire  
Strike the deep sorrows of his lyre!"

"In entering upon my second division, the persons to be flogged," continued the Professor, return-

ing from his digression, "I would exclude from that category all persons amenable to moral influences. To chastise his thoughtless errors with the rattan demoralizes a high-spirited youth, and tends to remove the stigma which corporal punishment should carry with it. I am thus led to propound a seeming paradox—that both slight offenders and stout offenders should be exempted from the rod. And the latter exemption, it is to be observed, should be made in no unworthy or pusillanimous spirit, but simply because superior physical endowments, no less than superior mental endowments, are the gifts of Providence and should be respected accordingly by the pious preceptor. What precise limit of size, positive or relative, should confer an immunity from the lash, it would be rash to specify; but I cannot hesitate to say for myself that I view a youth six feet high and broad in proportion as decidedly exceeding that limit.

Whipping is the fittest and most efficacious chastisement for impure, deceitful and dishonest juveniles; and it is all nonsense to say that it degrades characters of this description. A box on the ear is a handy and instantaneous mode of suppressing an insubordinate or cheeky boy."

The President feared that too hard a cuff might have the opposite effect of increasing the lad's cheek;

and the unblushing Muggs exclaimed that in his opinion it would be an unworthy act to lick a saucer!

"This odious idea," retorted the Professor, "may have naturally suggested itself to the irrepressible Querist over his cups; and considering his besetting propensity, I am willing to pardon the atrocity. On the whole I am opposed to the flogging of adults, excepting criminals guilty of extraordinary brutality. I am especially pleased that the old statute has been repealed which permitted a man to beat his wife with a rod no thicker than his little finger. It would spoil a good or a middling woman, and be too thin for a bad one. The corporal punishment of enlisted men I deem injudicious as well as tyrannical, for I believe, with Horace, that warriors accustomed to be whipped in time of peace are the more likely to let themselves be whipped in time of war.

Thirdly, in deciding upon the instrument to be employed, it will be necessary first to consider the nature of the offence. For we must not, Draco-like, chastise all faults with equal severity, nor, as the Roman poet puts it,

*'Nec scutica dignum horribili sectere flagello.'*

*'Nor visit with the cruel scourge a boy that wants the strap.'*

Next we should have regard to the sound and the

sensation produced by the corrective implement, and the circumstances under which it is to be used. When, for the purpose of intimidating the depraved, the execution takes place *coram populo*, that is before the school, a resounding rod or cat-of-nine-tails should be called into requisition, and applied with a view to the acoustic effect, mainly to the back, with, of course, occasional visits to the legs, where the feelings are more acute. During the presence of visitors, however, the deterrent benefit of publicity must be waived, and recourse had to the private study and the whip, to be addressed exclusively to the tenderer points. On such occasions it is well to divest the culprit of his shoes, or to revive the antiquated but convenient system of 'horsing,' in order to preclude noisy and inopportune stampings on the floor. I have even found it expedient, during the session of a meddling board of trustees, to replace the whip by a bunch of nettles, wielded, I need hardly observe, with gloved hands. Having on that occasion, with prudent forethought, ordered the delinquent to his bed, I both found the process less laborious, and the few cries which penetrated from the dormitory to the board-room were happily mistaken for the whinings of an invalid. A supple rod is generally more durable than a stiff one, but must be warily used. In the hands of a too en-

thusiastic flogger it is liable to miss the legs of a nimble malefactor and come in contact with the striker's person—making the misunderstanding a most unpleasant one.

I had intended to touch lightly upon those portions of the human anatomy which are the most sensitive to pain, but, being unhappily without an assistant, I must needs omit this interesting department of my subject, unless, indeed, some Querist will kindly volunteer to be the medium of illustration.

‘The advisability of flogging,’ which forms my fourth heading, is sufficiently established by the marked deterioration of the young, incident upon the general disuse of this mode of discipline in our public and private schools. Boys of from seven to seventeen enjoy almost a monopoly of certain streets in the metropolis and other cities for the practice of baseball and pyrotechnics, single combats and evil communications; and rash citizens who venture to question their proprietary rights are treated to a volley of slang, stones, or saliva, according to their size, age, and sex. In the more plebeian neighborhoods bands of pubescent bravos, well known to the police, infest the thoroughfares and emulate their exemplars, Dick Turpin and Sixteen-String Jack, with a boldness in-

duced by past immunity from the lash and (too probably) future immunity from the gallows."

Miss Taack observed that she could vouch for the alarming spread of youthful degeneracy. It was impossible to say where it would end; but she noticed with consternation that we already had thousands of abandoned infants!

"In the public schools," the Professor proceeded to say, "half of the teacher's time is occupied in watching and temporizing with tricksters, who smile at accumulated punishments which they know must be partly, if not entirely, condoned, because otherwise their preceptors would be *exclusively* occupied in recording and examining impositions. Thus the poor instructors are becoming a byword and scorn to the scholars and their parents, for while the improvement of well-meaning pupils is their most important and expected task, they are diverted from its due performance by the tricks of the ill-disposed."

The speaker was here again interrupted by Miss Taack, who exclaimed that a teacher's notions of "diversion" must be somewhat different to hers! She had imagined that the fun was all on the side of the scholars; for in her own school-days she had often seen the French mistress deplorably agitated, and the unfeeling pupils dilated at her distress.



"But perhaps," continued the learned orator, "all this will never be remedied until school trustees and commissioners are obliged to qualify for their responsible offices by undertaking for one month the management of a large school-room and class, simultaneously, by the sole means of 'moral suasion,' or an 'approved system of grading.' I shrewdly suspect that the humanitarians would learn from such a practical ordeal that the most reliable method of 'awakening a sense of honor in the young' frequently is to appeal directly to the seat of that virtue."

The President was opposed to this stern mode of administering correction; and, like Tom Hood, he had often in his boyhood consigned a switching pedagogue to the bottomless pit.

"Or invoked upon him the curse of Cane!" ejaculated the irrepressible Querist.

"It was with admirable judgment," said the Professor, not noticing the interruption, "that the older Greek grammarians selected 'to strike' as their first example of a verb. By the aid of a similar selection, with just a few practical illustrations of its active and passive voices, I have generally managed to convey a distinct idea of a transitive verb, and to lead my pupils speedily and successfully through a somewhat crucial stage in the study of language. Nor is it in

grammar alone that the instrument of correction possesses the faculty of quickening the intellectual powers. A cane bent into a hoop, two canes whose adjacent extremities are equidistant, and three canes enclosing a space, I have found to produce clear and lasting conceptions of the respective natures of a circle, parallel lines and a triangle. And in the rare cases where these conceptions have become obliterated, I have ascertained that mathematical figures described by a stick upon the back of the tyro will remain indelibly graven on his memory. In short, whatever may be the subject that is being taught, an efficient application of the rod can never fail to produce upon the student a very marked impression."

At the conclusion of the Professor's remarks Miss Taack prevented all further debate by reminding the President that the switching hour of night was past.

## SESSION VII.

THE countenance of the Chairman, as he appeared upon the scene on this occasion, was unwontedly downcast and severe. He complained that the Society had disappointed him. Instead of a generous rivalry as to priority in presenting papers, there appeared to be a general desire to shirk the responsibilities of authorship and to pick holes in the contributions of the few productive Querists. One silent member, with whom he had remonstrated about his apathy, had expressed a readiness to take his turn upon the rostrum, and when the day of meeting came he *was* ready—with his “Excuses,” which his modesty forsooth forbade him to deliver in person. He (the chairman) was therefore to be victimized into reading this apology for a paper!

## EXCUSES.

“The most effective excuses generally rest upon some illustrious precedent or authority; and the

reference should be calculated either to convince the reason or to excite laughter. The Devil, who is as great an adept in excusing as in accusing—

‘The Devil can quote Scripture for his purpose.

An evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,

A goodly apple rotten at the core.’

In spite of this strong language of the poet the example of His Satanic Majesty seems to be very catching. ‘Sir,’ said somebody—possibly Dr. Johnson—when his pastor remonstrated with him for ogling pretty girls in church, ‘the text which forbids me to behold the mote that is in my brother’s eye does not prohibit me from regarding the *beam* that is in a sister’s eye.’ A certain, or rather an uncertain, convict, sentenced to be flogged for a breach of jail discipline, was being divested of his prisoner’s uniform prior to undergoing flagellation. He begged hard not to be stript, but was refused on the ground that he was an old offender, and perfectly aware of the gravity of his offence. ‘The more reason,’ cried the sinner, ‘that I should be allowed my coat, for it is written, “He that knoweth his master’s will and doeth it not shall be beaten with *many*

*stripes.*''' Hard bargainers have more than once sent their censors home smiling by adducing, with an unusual stress, the precept, 'Go thou and *do* likewise.'

A jolly Irish rector of the old school, who belonged to the diocese of Tuam, kept a pack of harriers. This circumstance was long unknown to his diocesan, thanks to the general aversion of the Irish peasantry to 'peaching'—an aversion which is seldom overcome, except in political conspiracies. But a sudden visit of the prelate took the sporting parson by surprise, and he had only just time to remove the dogs to a distant outhouse. As luck would have it, the bishop expressed a desire to see the grounds, and, as he neared the place of its confinement, the whole pack gave tongue. 'My lord,' cried the rector, hoping that a ready compliment to his superior's own youthful fame in the gentle art of venery might provoke that dignitary into smiling, 'it is clear that they have smelt an old sportsman.' A shadow of a smile crossed the episcopal features, and they relapsed into austerity. 'Don't you think, my lord,' asked the clergyman, pursuing his advantage, 'that the New Testament sanctions this healthy recreation?'

'I should like to know where!' said the bishop.

““It is the hare; come let us kill him,”” answered the unabashed parson.

The Right Reverend gentleman remonstrated that a quotation should always be correct.

‘But surely,’ rejoined the rector, ‘you can’t expect me to be particular to a *hair*?’

This unexpected atrocity completed the prelate’s demoralization. He smiled, and the daring incumbent kept his living, at the expense, it is true, of the harriers.”

“Of course,” said Miss Taack dubiously, “that may be one mode of interpreting the text.”

*Mr. Muggs.*—“It is the *only* interpretation of *course*.”

*The President.*—“The Querist is too much given to *running* commentaries.”

*Mr. Muggs.*—“Our President is given to a baser vice—he seems inclined to ‘ave a rise!”

(*A cry of Oh! and with staring eyes and perpendicular hair, a sensitive member sank to earth.*)

“’Tis always so,” said the unfeeling Muggs, hounded on by the reproaches of the bystanders, “the timid hair starts from the inanimate *form* when it hears the ‘cry.’”

Shade of Hahnemann! the last enormity neutralized the first, and the prostrate member rose.

"A feint!" observed the President, as he proceeded to resume his reading.

"Useful and ingenious pleas in arrest of judgment may of course be devised without dragging in any quotation whatever. In the school where I learned that ignorance is not always bliss, all new rules and regulations were duly read out by a drill sergeant, whose duty was to execute the sentences of the masters, and assume control of the boys during play-hours. On one occasion a fresh arrival, nicknamed Foxy, was detected in a lie, into which his penchant for excuses had betrayed him. Our head-master had invited him into his study and was commencing the dissertation upon the heinousness of the offence, etc., which commonly preceded correction, when Foxy abruptly informed him that he was not aware of its being against the rules to tell a lie.

'Didn't know it was against rule to tell a lie?' roared the astounded pedagogue.

'No, sir,' explained the urchin; 'for I never heard the sergeant giving out any rule against it.'

Foxy used to tell us that once before, when he was eight years old, he evaded a whipping by tearfully confessing to his governess an offence (which he feared to be convicted of), and attributing it, in language prudently recollected from a previous lecture of hers,

to a 'Satanic delusion.' In his 'Quatre-vingt Treize,' Victor Hugo mentions that Pitou, a royalist ballad-writer, being arrested during the Reign of Terror for slapping his coat-tails at the word *civism*, only escaped the guillotine by aptly observing that 'it was the very opposite of his head which deserved punishment.' Under the régime of 'moral influences' there remain few sharp incentives to apologetic wit, and this pleasing accomplishment threatens to be numbered among the lost arts.

In a story which somebody tells, a very ingenious pretext is credited to a Scotch parson under the stimulus of an irrepressible craving for a pinch of snuff. Unfortunately when the longing came upon him he was in the middle of an impressive sermon against tobacco. Happening, just as the desire was becoming irresistible, to notice his ancient clerk snuffing away right under the pulpit, an inspiration seized him. He stretched his hand down, and commanded the delinquent to pass up that snuff-box. 'My brethren,' he resumed, as he clutched the box, 'while I am striving to awaken your minds to the evils of tobacco, here is my own clerk, Sandy McSandy, destroying the effect of my words. He goes on this way dipping in first one hand and then the other and lift-



ing them to his nose (*here his reverence suited the action to the word*), and snuffing up the abomination! You know you did, Sandy!' added he, as if that discomfited sinner were about to deny the imputation.

When it is necessary to excuse ourselves by proxy, we should be very careful in choosing our spokesmen. Servants, especially Irish ones, are seldom to be trusted. An acquaintance of mine once directed her footman to inform visitors that she was not at home. One incredulous caller asked him if he was *sure* his mistress was out.

'Yes, ma'am,' said he, 'for she tould me so this minnit.' "

At the conclusion of the reading, Miss Taack remarked that she could not answer for flunkies, as she never kept one; but she agreed with Mr. O'Callahan that servant girls 'were imminently unsuited to be spokesmen.' She had known their statements to be so mixed up that it was quite impossible to execrate them from their confusion.

Muggs thought that in one respect they were *reliable* mouthpieces—they didn't object to repeating a lie a dozen times in an afternoon. Talking of servants reminded him of a conundrum printed

by a certain Querist, whom modesty forbade his naming :

“Why is the German Emperor’s coachman like his master? *Ans.* Because he carries out his sovereign, Will !”

*Total and disordered rout of members.*

## SESSION VIII.

WHEN it appeared that a quorum had taken their seats, the President rose to say that his remonstrances about their indolence seemed to have been wasted on the desert air. Perhaps, this being their last meeting for the present season, Querists had antedated or anticipated their vacation : at all events no one had as yet come forward with a contribution. Any literary remarks would therefore be in order.

A mercenary member explained that his leisure time had been wholly occupied in elaborating the scheme of a great newspaper, "The Winding Sheet," to be devoted to the interests of cremation, inhumation and suspension. It was expected to triple the circulation of the *Daily Noose*, which owed its popularity to the unaided charms of the last topic, and an appropriate mispronunciation. To secure a perennial supply of casualties, the "Sheet" would denounce, as despotic and inimical to enterprise, the testing or condemnation of boilers, the liability of railway companies for the lives of their passengers, the interference with the right of carrying concealed

weapons, and the compulsory examination of dispensing chemists. With the same view it would advocate the free sale of poisons, the license to adulterate food and drink, the nobility of revenge, the duty of acquitting the fair chastisers of masculine turpitude, the spread of fire insurance, the fiery celebration of national anniversaries, the petting of inebriates, the exclusively medical treatment of kleptomaniacs and emotional criminals, and the manumission of converted felons. He respectfully solicited the co-operation of the society.

O'Callahan hoped he would shortly be able to offer the gentleman the MS. of a serial eminently suited to the proposed journal. It was entitled "The Martyrs at the Steak," or "Mrs. Boggs's Boarders," and contained some startling revelations.

Muggs said that the enterprising publisher had omitted one grand incentive to homicide. He should establish a column of 'fashionable intelligence,' interview milliners and footmen for items, and in playful and familiar phrases parade the names of modest and unblemished ladies side by side with the females who pay for notoriety. At first sight the proprietor might apprehend unpleasant consequences for number one, if he should add this to the other attractions of his journal; but with a little judicious

management the mortality might be confined to reporters and managing editors. And it ought to be considered that nothing increases the circulation of a paper like thrilling accidents or scandals among its staff, for the public eagerly buy the sheet which is sure to contain the freshest and fullest particulars. He would further suggest that the paper should be printed in crimson, which, besides being typical of the contents, would insure its being always red from beginning to end.

The mercenary member flattered himself it would be read with an *a*.

"There certainly is *a* difference between the words," Mr. Muggs admitted.

A modest member trusted that the "Sheet" would not seek its sensations in personals and personalities, or delude the simple by puffing patent panaceas.

"Malicious libels," said Miss Taack, "will never cease until writers are compelled to sign their contributions and become directly responsible therefor. Under the present system the purest characters are not secure from synonymous insinuations. With the several improvements indicated, I daresay the contemplative daily will be a commercial success, for it is painful to see the avidity with which people devour the details of hairbreath scrapes and melancholic ac-

cidents. The editor of the 'Sheet,' however, should avoid the many conventual absurdities which are now current in newspaper market reports. How 'hops' can be 'steady,' how there can exist 'a firm feeling in coffee,' or how opium can be 'no longer a drug on the market,' is more than I can comprehend. It may be news to *some* people to be told by a reporter that at an Agricultural Fair 'cattle are going at fair prices,' while 'swine are dull,' or that in a commercial mart '*offerings* are limited' in leather! I once saw in a Southern paper that 'Barbadoes' lasses were selling at 45 c. per gal!' but I suppose this must have been before the abolition of slavery. It is strange but true that all these ridiculous market 'quotations' are published by their illiterate writers without a single pair of converted commas! Now, as hints which our enterprising fellow-Querist is welcome to adopt, I shall just give a few specimens (chiefly from the poets) of what *I* call genuine

## TRADE QUOTATIONS.

Patronize a good tailor and butcher: 'for it is fit and meat so to do.'

Motto for a baker: 'Tell me where is fancy bread?' (Inquire within.)

Maxim for a confiding florist: 'Charge for the golden lilies *now*.'

Mode of addressing a musician of the name of James: 'Bright Jem instinct with music, vocal spark!'

Song for would-be borrower, when money is reported 'close:': 'Thou art so near and yet so far.'"

The mercenary member passed a flattering eulogium upon the lady's originality and discernment. With a little practice on the press, she would doubtless become a literary star. He would be happy to afford her ample opportunity to cultivate her powers of composition, and was willing to engage her for a year to furnish a daily column of similar citations—two copies of the paper to be taken in payment, with an extra one if she should organize a club of ten. At the close of their contract, if she had grown famous, he would make a handsome proportional increase to her stipend, or even—if she *should* ungratefully desire to forsake him—he would waive his equitable claims to her services.

O'Callahan protested that the rendezvous of the Querists was not quite the place for getting up bargains or sells—of this description. It was foreign to his conception of a polite society that members should derive profit from their membership. He did

not, however, want to influence the lady adversely to the gentleman's proposition ; but he strongly advised her to ask for an indefinite time to decide, and at its expiration to request an extension.

At this point the mercenary member angrily started to his feet, and the harmonious decorum of the Metropolitan Society might have been rudely interrupted for the first time, had not Muggs created an opportune diversion by abruptly proposing what he fancifully styled a conundrum :

" Why is a Bewildered Querist like the yolk of an egg ? " *Answer.*—" Because he is an egg-centric fellow ! "

Completely riddled by this unexpected discharge, the irate Querists promptly shared in the general collapse. On returning to his senses, the Professor gasped that such an atrocity was unworthy of one who professed to be a " scientific gent."

" The learned Querist," cried Muggs, with more than usual emphasis, " is utterly mistaken : I neither claim nor desire to be a ' gent.' The *Querists' Webster*, if I live to introduce that valuable compilation to the public, will contain the following definition : ' GENT.—A vulgar fraction of a gentleman.' "

The Professor hastened to explain that he sympathized with Mr. Muggs' aversion to the abbreviation,



which he had used only as part of a quotation. In his own opinion this contraction conveyed a very contracted idea of a gentleman.

Symptoms of thirst and restlessness having now displayed themselves, the President said :

*" Ladies and Gentlemen :*

I have now to announce the termination of the first season of the Metropolitan Society of Bewildered Querists. Not being a tailor, I have no wish to cut up members about the close, and then to draw tears, by a touching valedictory. I therefore, without further adieu, dismiss you with my benediction, congratulating you upon the curious results already attained by the Society, and trusting that during your recess you will strenuously continue the pursuit of heterogeneous knowledge under difficulties."

WOMAN'S WORTH.



## WOMAN'S WORTH.\*

*On the 31st of September, 1872, the following characteristic address was delivered before the Anti-Man Association of the United States, assembled in secret session, by Mrs. —, a tall and spiritualistic aspirant for the Presidential chair :*

MY FELLOW-COUNTRYWOMEN :

Even within the restricted sphere in which she has been forced to move, the achievements of woman have been wondrous. Indeed, it has been sensibly remarked that all eminent personages of ancient and modern times have been either women or Irishmen, and that the exceptions would have been women, but for circumstances over which we have no control. In demonstrating the truth of this statement, we must not always accept current reports. *History* was written by man, and *his story* naturally exaggerates the

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\* Republished, with large additions and changes, from the New York "World." In this speech a few borrowed jokes appear, in connections which it is hoped may excuse their resurrection.

exploits of his own sex. Comparative philology and the inspired writers are more trustworthy guides.

Thus there are good grounds for supposing that ships were invented by a female. The word for a vessel is feminine in English and most other languages, and a ship, as you are all aware, has many other points of resemblance to a woman. Sometimes she is attached to a buoy, sometimes she is tender to a man-of-war, or hankers after a swell. On other occasions she goes into stays, or makes up to an old pier. It has even been suggested by some commentators that the first vessel was named after a female, probably its inventor. *Ark*, they say, is a well-known woman's name, as in *Joan of Arc*; and as it has been recorded of Joan of Arc that she was *Maid* of Orleans, so it has been written of Noah's Ark that she was *made* of gopher wood. St. Paul himself, apparently, recognizes the striking analogy between gals and galleys when he speaks of woman as "the weaker vessel." But beyond this there is reason to suppose that Eve herself was a *whaler*, for we read in the fourth chapter of Genesis, "Adam, Seth, 'Eve, Cain, Abel.'" Many modern women succeed capitally in the same line of business. How well I remember, when my mother took me on her knee, what a lot of *blubber* she would get after a little

*whaling!* Indeed, I was once so much *struck* by her performance, that I took to wailing myself. Women are no less adroit as fishers for plaice and other flat fish, while in fishing for compliments they are most acute anglers. They have always shown a marked partiality for water, insomuch so that they have often been appropriately called ducks. Our depreciators may say that we cannot man the navy; but it is from us that all sensible men select their *mates*, and no man can deny that from our very girlhood we make the best of *skippers!*

In chemistry the services of woman have been considerable. Besides giving their names to such useful therapeutic agents as *Sal-volatile*, *Bella-donna* and *Mag-nesia*, she was the first to employ a very valuable preparation of potash. "Io died of love for Jupiter," the fable tells us; but we know better—*Io-dide of potassium*, a martyr to the noble cause of science.

Ladies' qualifications as logicians are of the highest order. For the *argumentum ad hominem*, for begging the question, for eluding the point, and for never giving in, give me a woman.

In arguing, too, all men must own her skill,  
For e'en though vanquished, she can argue still.

And combined with these apparently contradictory gifts is that calm and unbiased judgment, that habit of impartial decision, which has wrung from men the unwilling confession that we are indeed the *fair* sex. If Aristotle introduced the synthetic method of reasoning, it seems beyond a doubt that a woman originated the analytic system. And yet historians must pluck even this laurel from our brow, and claim the credit for an English philosopher. As if the first Ann Elizer *could* have been a man ! That our contributions to science might have been more numerous, I cannot deny ; but then so great is our attachment to the *pursuit* of truth that we don't want to overtake it, and end the chase.

In the realms of literature, however, woman has roamed untrammelled by any such restriction, and her career has been proportionately glorious. Owing to her natural aptitude for *telling stories*, she has already in a great degree supplanted her competitor in the production of romances. Her superiority in the poetic art would be still more marked were it not that she devotes so many of her imaginative efforts to those sublime but impracticable subjects—babies—and that many of her genuine triumphs have been coolly claimed and appropriated by man. Thus Horace insidiously talks of the “ masculine ” Sappho ;

and they actually teach in our colleges that the celebrated poetesses, *An-acreon* and *Lu-cretius*, belonged to the ugly sex! It would hardly become *me* to dwell upon our well-known success as lecturers—both before and behind the curtain.

It is not my opinion that woman's vocation lies among the trades or mechanical arts. She feels a natural attraction to *teas*; but yet her finer instincts revolt against a *grocer's sphere* of duties. Lot's wife may have been changed into a pillar of salt; but, thank goodness, it is only men who voluntarily convert themselves into salt-cellars! Our fair hands are naturally suited for marketing, yet they would shrink from the cruel offices of the shambles. The woman of high aspirations should not descend to the low plane of the carpenter; nor, though she may favor sweeping reform, should she soil her skirts in cleaning streets or chimneys. It is not for her to waste her restless energies in mending shoes, in grinding knives, or repairing the fastenings of doors. And yet—to their shame be it spoken—many of our most advanced females are to be seen going about with *disordered locks*! They charge us with neglecting the homelier feminine accomplishments: few of us, they say, can cut or alter, gopher or take in. This petty reproach is most unfair. Any well-trained girl of



the present generation (and what girl who can afford the material is *not* well-trained?) can cut a body in the most approved style, and alter or take in a beau; and our own husbands and fathers are ready to avouch that we can *go for* a new dress, whenever we see the ghost of a chance!

The proficiency of woman in painting has not been particularly remarkable. It is nevertheless true, that with characteristic boldness she has usually selected the highest and most delicate of subjects, and is most devoted to painting *herself*, and that, in another field, master pieces of design have been executed by various designing females. But our triumphs in the symphonious art, from the days "when Music, heavenly maid, was young," more than atone for our comparative remissness with the brush. Fluting is supposed to have been invented by the same talented lady who introduced crinolines, and who composed, in commemoration of the latter invention, that celebrated opera, "*The Rows of Cast-Steel*." Even Handel cannot hold a candle to the famous *Andante*, whose name appears on so many lovely compositions. Yet I do not grudge to man his proper meed of praise: he may claim his Mozarts, his Verdis, and his Offenbachs; he can blow his own trumpet, and count

by millions his *fiddlers*, and performers on the *pipe*. I will even admit that the goddess of harmony may have had a male associate, in accordance with the views of the poet, who observes that "Music arose with her voluptuous *swell*."

Though the pulpit has been closed to women before the era of the Rev. Olympia Brown, yet even under this disability they have won many theological distinctions, and from the earliest ages the belles have called sinners to church. If most of the *prophets* have been men, the *Marta's* were without exception females. If we have had one *John* the Baptist, we have had many *Anna-Baptists*. Indeed women have always been addicted to schisms—especially *witticisms*. Clergymen themselves have selected the *gown* as the proper garment for their sacerdotal office, and after taking our dress they leave us in the cold! And yet it is peculiarly unfair to debar us from the ministerial profession. We have always been favored mediums of communication between mankind and the spirit-world. We were chosen to tend the mysterious Vestal flame, and were the mouth-pieces for the utterances of the Delphic oracles. Two sisters invented the Rochester knockings,—as Collins says, "*rapt*, inspired"—and it remained for another woman to

span a chasm of twenty-two centuries and commune, in the best of Greek, with the manes of Demosthenes !

I take this opportunity to remove a slur cast upon modern spiritualism. Performances given in the dark, it is said, cannot bear the light. Now, just consider the facts. It is well known that flames have a tendency to burn blue in the presence of a genuine apparition, and a glimpse of one puts all natural hair into a perpendicular attitude. Could a ghost with the slightest pretensions to politeness, such a ghost in fact as would accept a civil invitation, be so ill-natured to the wearers of artificial ringlets as to make his appearance in the light. Besides, the duty on imported spirits is very high, and the darkness aids them in eluding the guardians of the law. It is, further, to be considered that at midnight, when spirits usually take their recess, the excise law goes into operation. And if the gas was *not* turned off, their revilers would talk of *ghastly* apparitions, or of mediums *gassing* the audience ! Would any spectre, I ask, with the smallest vestige of benevolence, expose its patrons or itself to such atrocities ?

Our sex, which many of its detractors own to be *enchancing*, *charming*, and *bewitching*, constitutes the greater part of the most interesting supernatural

beings. The Nymphs, Sirens and Mermaids, the Muses and Graces, were all female. So were the Oriental Peris, and, with few exceptions, our own Fairies, while even men allow us a majority among the angels.

Our fitness for the healing art has been freely admitted by the rougher sex :

“ O woman, in our hours of ease  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light, quivering aspen made,  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou ! ”

A handsome homœopathic doctress might be expected to heal numerous cases of blighted affection, on the principle that “ *like cures like*.” Her charms, reawakening the susceptibilities of love-sick swains, would often prove an effectual *anti-dote*. Thousands of men of all classes, but especially clerks and students, are pining to experience woman’s gentle treatment. Indeed the profession should be exclusively her own ; for, as Dr. Mary W. . . r has forcibly remarked, with indignation stamped upon her manly brow, every male doctor who pockets his professional fee unsexes himself and becomes a *fee*-male.

But it is not in this direction alone that man has usurped our feminine vocations. Brewing, baking, weaving, etc., were once conducted entirely by women, as any one acquainted with etymology might infer from such once common names as 'brewster,' 'malster,' 'bagster,' and 'spinster.' Of these trades they have only left us the last—a business which is unfortunately rather overcrowded just now. In all past ages the art of *match*-making was confined to us; but lately even this, our ancient monopoly, has been encroached upon by the matrimonial columns of certain journals. And, as if it was not enough to invade our various spheres of usefulness insidiously and by degrees, we have often been legislated *en masse* out of our legitimate callings. Statutes throwing thousands of women out of employment were enacted against the luxurious habits of the Roman matrons. And yet those paragons of Arcadian simplicity, their lords and masters, by the aid of drastic prescriptions used to manage three dinners or so a day, and probably wanted to secure the price of a fourth by reducing their wives' expenditures. But the most atrocious persecution of this nature was the notorious Salic Law, a measure disqualifying women from holding public offices, but originally aimed—according to certain unknown and talented historians

who have conducted their researches on the principles of Niebuhr—at a popular Queen Sally. The misguided enemies of this princess may have thought it a capital joke to make an *idle sally*!

Our depreciators will have it that we are incapable of performing military service, and therefore undeserving of a voice in the government of our country. Now, in spite of all the disadvantages imposed upon her, and notwithstanding her want of training, woman has fought, and fought heroically, on many memorable occasions. Need I allude to the Carthaginian ladies who tore their hair out to make bow-strings, and threw themselves into the flames of their native city? Need I mention Semiramis or Zenobia, the warlike Clorinda, immortalized by Tasso, or the chivalrous Britomart, celebrated in Spenser's "Faery Queene"? And the fire that warmed our grandmothers and aunts' sisters burns as brightly in our bosoms to-day. Each modern war has produced its heroines—the Commune its Petroleuses, the Italian struggle its Della Torres, the Southern Rebellion its Belle Boyds, and other fair creatures "who cherished noble longings for the strife." If, as Virgil records, "Penthesilea led her bands of Amazons, and, though a virgin, dared to engage with men," I know scores of maidens who would not shrink from

*engaging* with any eligible male, even if he were twice their size, and who need but a slight hint to rush to arms. If Judith is lauded in the sacred narrative for having fearlessly *cut off* a tyrant's head, more memorable exploits occasionally pass unrecorded before our eyes. The other day, in one of our most crowded streets, a brawny colored girl seized a youth who had offered an insignificant price for her luxuriant waterfall, and, grasping him by the hair, proceeded to "put a head *on* him." His big brother shared his fate, being speedily knocked out of time by the Ethiopian pet, who, at the beginning of each round, came promptly and spitefully to the *scratch*. If Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, smote an iron nail into the temple of the sleeping Sisera, did not Molly O'Dowd, the Billingsgate fish-woman, whip five policemen in five minutes with the natural nails of her hands? Who has not heard of the gigantic *Polly-phemus*, or of the gallant Lou-El-len, the Welsh princess who checked the victorious army of King Edward? Who has not read how the stout German matrons, of the Two-ton race, fired with the true spirit of Mars—and grandmars, fought side by side with their valiant sons? Before the invention of gunpowder, women loved to *draw the long bow*; and when contrasted with the most re-

doubted male archers, our archer graces were invariably conspicuous. Almost every girl had her bow—some, it is said, a dozen beaux at the same time, each of course “upon a string.” We have exhibited to the world a number of brilliant and successful *Sallics*; we march with the *infantry* in arms, and skilfully *repair the breeches*. We are never wholly shiftless, and when most tightly pressed on both flanks by hostile bands, we extricate ourselves by timely faints. We smile as we *scent the powder*; the sound of the *ball* is music to our ears, and even in the *rout* we remain irresistible!

Even the gentlest and most sensitive of our sex may be roused into combativeness by great and sudden provocation. Some time ago I myself was strolling quietly along, musing upon the chances of the Presidential election—as Shakspeare beautifully expresses it, “in maiden meditation, fancy free”—when an impudent scamp fixed his eyes upon my bonnet, and asked if it was cold up *there*! Thinking this a rather cool question, I was moving on, when the scoundrel called me his Lilliputian. Now this was a *little* too much. “Lilly who, sir?” said I: “I’ll have you to know that I’m neither Lilly this nor Lilly that, but a respectable married lady.” With that, I lifted him up gently by the two ears, and made him regard the situation from a somewhat



different point of view. As his education had evidently been sadly neglected, I devoted a minute to polishing him off. He tried to whistle it off as he retreated, but I noticed that the tune was, "Put me in my little bed."

After this *knock down* argument, why should I seek further for examples of woman's fighting qualities. That she would make a great *hit* in the gladiatorial arena, has been proved beyond a doubt by the *striking* illustrations I have given.

My fellow-countrywomen, in the hope that I may more signally display our executive ability and aid in transplanting our undeveloped energies to other and wider fields of usefulness, I have consented to make myself a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. For the salvation of our sex, I have mastered my natural diffidence; I have defied the voice of calumny, and borne the reproach of almost every disreputable 'ism.' You see before you a *long, suffering creature!* They say that I advocate polygamy, though my bosom friends can bear me witness that I *despise* a woman who would undertake the duties and responsibilities of married life with more than three husbands at the same period of her existence. They insinuate that in the approaching era I would confine man to the care of the household and the

nurture of children. Ladies, I have no such desire. I hold that (in families too poor to keep a nursery boy) no true wife should object to taking charge of the baby once in a while, especially on emergencies which may require tact and dissimulation. They even accuse me of favoring free love! They might as well say that I wanted to populate the Great American Desert by means of the multiplication table. *Free* love, indeed! Why, if there's one thing I scorn, it's a man who wants to have his courtship free of expense—to make love on the cheap! I consider it an inalienable right and privilege of the males to invite us to theatres, balls, drives and champagne suppers—not that *I* ever imbibe—and to present us with French candies, bouquets, diamonds, necklaces and chains. If they want woman to *hug her chain*, that's the way to do it. And yet they say that I wish to deprive men of all their privileges!

My enemies have even directed the most odious and absurd buffooneries against me and the noble ladies who labor with me. One jester forgets that I am not a spinster, and apprehends that my Presidential term will be an era of *mis*-rule, and my electors *mis*-chief-makers! Another says I remind him of a Crusader, because I am champion of the *cross*! The

Sage of Chappaqua—who, I am sorry to say, is more given to *saws* than wise sayings—suggests that I should give up silks and satins, because I want *muslin*' during the dog-days! Some learned philologist observes that we are on the fair road to prove that woman is derived from *woe* and *man*, and virgin from *vir* (a man) and *gin* (a snare). This vile lampoon upon the worthy Dr. Mary W——r has appeared in a public journal:

“The personal appearance of Dr. W——r is not attractive. He is not particularly neat in her clothing, and his hair is not nicely put up in a way to let you know if he is a woman or she is a man. He wears a sort of a cross between a frock coat and a petticoat, which comes down to her knees, beneath which are conspicuous his pantaloons and boots. We thought he was somewhat rude when she stepped off the platform, as he did not offer us her hand to aid us in alighting. He asked us to attend her lecture, but she did not offer us any of his tickets.”

And just because this lady, smarting under a sense of her sex's wrongs, has adopted a practical mode of *re-dress*, another scribbler must needs stigmatize her as a *pantaloontic*! I suppose it is masculine logic to condemn the breeches which etiquette prescribes for males as breaches of etiquette in a female!

But I pursue my course undismayed by these shafts of sarcasm and detraction. I feel that the crisis has come when the political trickery of man must yield to the winning ways of woman. There are three factions in the field, exclusive of George Francis Train ; and each of them is weakened by internal dissensions, except that of George Francis—whose party consists of himself ! Now is the time to strike. Let us combine for a few weeks, and the male creation will be at our feet. Where is the vaunted politeness of our oppressors, if a lady is to *stand* for office, and a man to occupy the Presidential *chair* ?

They may boast that Grant is a man of *fine presents*, or speak of him as a highly *gifted* personage. They may talk of his having been a tanner, or of Wilson's having been a cobbler, hoping to make their supporters true to the *last*. As if it were a credit to public men that they had *sold their own soles* for gain ! But these official freebooters will soon have to abandon their booty for the *thread* of their political existence is *waxing to an end* !

One moon-light night, not long ago, I stood beneath the sky awaiting the approach of my spiritual affinity, through whose assistance I sought to read the secrets of the stars. The rapturous and sublime emotions of

the hour were presently interrupted by an inaudible voice. "Demosthenes!" I murmured, as our spirits mingled, "say, what is the mystic sentence of the night?" "Tondapamcibomenos, thug domh pogue, ma colleen og," replied the orator with true oracular ambiguity—which means, when translated from the *original* Greek, "To the tanner tanning, and leathering to the leatherer." "And what of Greeley?" I inquired breathlessly. "Will Horace cope successfully with the great star-combination?" "His *horoscope* says, no," was the reassuring answer.

It is therefore with much *assurance* my countrywomen, of assurance derived from spirits and from the bier, that I enter the political arena as your candidate, the exponent of your aspirations, and reformer of your grievances. In your behalf I advocate the reconstruction of our postal system—a thorough regulation of the *mails*. I favor the one term principle, which suits my own retiring disposition. I maintain the importance of reducing taxation and cutting down the public expenditure. And who is so fit as woman to bear the standard of economical reform? Has she not always protested against the extravagance of *man*, and often raised an immense *bustle* about a little *waist*? I insist on the abolition of the oppressive duties upon silks, satins, laces and

gloves—dyes, perfumes and cosmetics—and other necessities of life ; and, as it is an axiom in political economy that the public burdens should rest most heavily upon articles of luxury, I propose to increase the imposts upon tobacco and liquors, firearms and fishing-rods, base-balls, and billiard tables, and all such incentives to idleness and dissipation.

You have long sought, as your candidate for the White House, a representative of *high standing*—a person of some *weight* in the community—a woman capable of *filling* the Presidential chair, or any other chair in the United States. Now that you have found a *fit* and *suitable* executive—as they said of Andy Johnson, because he was a tailor—stick to your colors. Practice your favorite motto, and “let your light shine before *men*.” If you meet with some discomforts, or lose a few silly admirers more or less, recollect that we must sometimes “stoop to conquer,”—as I once remarked when I gave a small boy a box on the ear. Go boldly to the polls : take with you your credulous husbands, beaux and brothers. Let us occupy the place intended for the last and best of created beings :

“For Nature swears *us* lovely dears  
Her noblest work she classes, O ;  
Her ‘prentice han’ she tried on man,  
And then she made the lasses, O.”

## CUTS AND GUARDS.\*

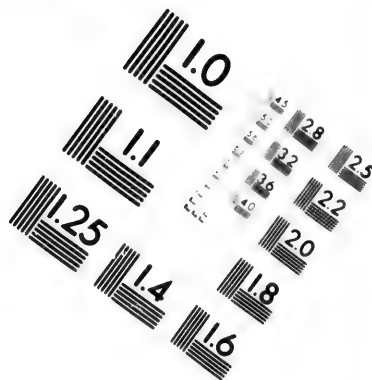
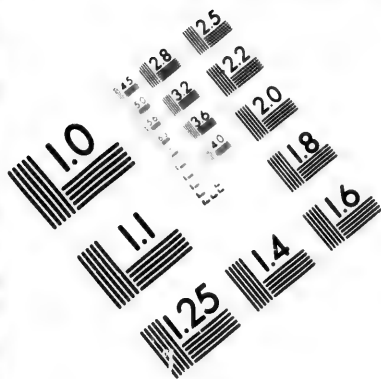
IN a disturbed state of society, and at an epoch which we find it unnecessary and indeed impossible to particularize, a rather truculent and hairy customer, richly garnished with bowie knives and pistols, requested the services of a barber, offering the liberal fee of a sovereign for a clean shave in five minutes, but threatening in a decidedly business-like way instant death as the penalty for a single abrasion of the skin. His conditions being cheerfully acquiesced in, at the successful close of the operation the eccentric customer expressed his surprise at the other's temerity, adding that he was quite in earnest himself. "But," explained the tonsorial artist, calmly and suggestively, "I should have seen the blood first!" He had probably heard the proverb about a stitch in time, and believed a seasonable cut quite as efficacious on occasions. The history of gladiators and pugilists strikingly illustrates the same principle; but the merits of the cut preventive are just as clearly ex-

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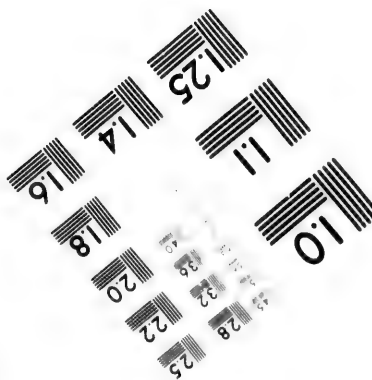
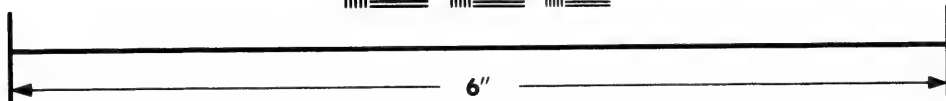
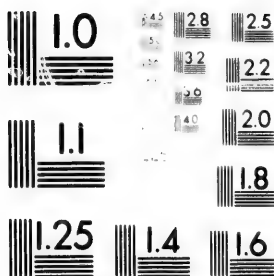
\* From "The Round Table,"

hibited in the social arena, and our present business is with the tactics of those more polished combatants who aim to pierce the feelings, not the hides, of their antagonists. Have you wounded a confiding friend in any tender point? Have you sneered at his morals before divines, at his tailor before the fair sex, at his person before anybody, and do you imagine him aware of the fact? Pass him on the earliest opportunity with an abstracted mien, and a countenance more in sorrow than in anger. Startled at being anticipated, he perhaps fancies that he has himself been misrepresented to you, and, with a new insight into the malice of human nature, he believes you another of its victims. Perhaps, angry at the indignity, he seeks an explanation, in which, prepared and cool, you have a double advantage. Even should pride or a certainty of wrongs received prevent his taking any action, you have still gained by adding insult to injury. You have disturbed his equilibrium, while you have maintained your own gentlemanlike repose; you have snubbed, and not been snubbed. And if the motive of a meditated slight be interest or caprice instead of righteous indignation, the antidote or solace is the same. For example, when a long-descended simpleton or a *nouveau riche* desires to drop an obscure or a poor





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acquaintance, it is better for both parties that the latter should take the initiative. It preserves the self-respect of the one, while it wounds the self-love of the other. So far for the philosophy of the cut defensive or anticipatory.

A readiness to take offence is generally a mark of conscious inferiority or an exacting egotism. In the crowded assembly, in the commercial or fashionable thoroughfare, the detective may notice everything, the reporter rather more. But ordinary mortals are apt to be occasionally distracted by their thoughts and surroundings—ladies to be immersed in a study of the fashions, the ruder sex entranced by passing beauty. Society men are embarrassed by the multiplicity of their acquaintances, who, like misfortunes, will come in battalions, and often on both flanks at once; while strangers are not on the *qui vive* to notice unexpected friends. Philosophers and short-sighted people have a prescriptive claim to forbearance, always allowed by people unconscious of any social inferiority or injury done; and the victim of a squint may simultaneously offend two unreflecting strangers by unwarranted nods and stares, while the real recipient of his oblique regards may smart under an imaginary cut. Indeed, we have seen it in print that a squinting man of fortune, lost

in admiration of a lovely *débutante* at a dance, was asked his intentions by the mothers of two ladies of an uncertain age.

But if in many cases it is narrow-minded or even vulgar to magnify a non-recognition into a social *casus belli*, the animus of some cuts is unmistakable, and is indicated by signs intelligible to all but the naturally or artificially obtuse. The cut ideal, it is true, ignores the existence of its unhappy object with a look so exempt from anger, regret, and every other emotion, so naturally occupied by other sights and sounds, frivolous or serious, of the time being, that it has absolutely no discernible traces. Perhaps the recipient of that animated but unrecognizing glance, aware of some growing coolness, of some wrong received or done, comprehends and excepts its meaning—accepts it even with well-bred indifference. Yet it leaves some sting; his society has been dropped and has created no necessary vacuum—he feels at least a little smaller. The ideal has, however, been more fully attained when the puzzled victim has exposed or re-exposed himself to the same neglect; and the closer the ties of blood or affection that have been so nonchalantly severed, the more complete the artistic triumph. A coquette who gives his *congé* to an ineligible or superfluous conquest,

especially relishes his non-acceptance of the dismissal, and gracefully renews the slight, pleased with the mingled tribute to her histrionic talents and her charms. Between this exceptional perfection of disguise and the wanton display of petty spite there are many intervals. For if voluntary abstraction, as philosophers say, distinguishes man from the other animals, the nearer he approaches the brute creation the less will be the development of this faculty. And, beneath a would-be imperturbable exterior, some gleam of consciousness — an over-done gayety, a shadow of regret — will usually betray the absence of the “nil admirari.” Where, indeed, the person we ignore has become an object of our positive aversion, a voluntary infusion of superciliousness, if it does not enhance the venom of the cut, may at least spare us the recurrence of an unwelcome presence; and candor is surely allowable when it can be utilized. On a *noscitur a sociis* principle the cut *prononcé* is equally effective when an acquaintance labors under an unpopularity deserved or undeserved, or when he has become so hopelessly seedy as to detract from our status, social or professional. It is gossiped, indeed, that some of our modern millionaires owe much of their success to such prompt vindications of their sensitive respectability. In a majority

of instances, however, all signs of feeling and manifestations of intention are involuntary shortcomings from the self-created ideal or the finished exemplar. Yet we are cognizant of a few cases where such weaknesses of the flesh have worked out satisfactory consummations. A glance of ingenuous indignation from a wrongly aspersed friend may lead one to investigation and amends; a quiver of the lip, a softening of the eye, a flush of the cheek, while it betrays an assumed indifference, may bring back a truant lover in sackcloth and ashes to his discarded flame.

If the excellence of a cut varies according to the training and self-possession of the actor, the mode of procedure is generally regulated by the motive. In this country of ups and downs men of the world have found it injudicious to adopt the <sup>cut</sup> direct with an embarrassed acquaintance who may be blessed with either character or friends. A quiet avoidance answers their immediate purpose quite as well, while it exempts them from indignant remarks about their insincerity or selfishness, and reserves to them the privilege of welcoming or possibly sharing in the contingent prosperity of their *friend*. In the execution of this judicious plan shops and offices become sudden havens of refuge from inopportune collisions; and the self-possessed may utilize even pri-

vate houses by vague yet affectionate inquiries for an ideal Smith or Jones. A meeting with a man "who has seen better things," on a country road, if less likely to compromise one, is much more perplexing to evade, though an inventive genius might improvise the chase of an imaginary rat. A gambler of versatility and assurance used to anticipate the temporarily embarrassed members of his iraternity by lamenting his own disasters and requesting a loan—throwing thereby the burden of evasion on another's shoulders. But this last *ruse* may have a disadvantage of its own. The poor are notoriously charitable—*non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco*—and it is distressing to be offered half of a disappointed man's last dollar. The indirect cut is often suggested by pure amiability. Arm-in-arm with Brown, a quiet Roman Catholic, you naturally shirk Cantwell, the nasal controversialist. Warned by an angry sire against the society of Gay, a ne'er-do-weel, young hopeful, side by side with that fascinating scamp, describes his parent in the distance, and filially resolves to alter his course—to spare a father's feelings. And doubtless a somewhat similar delicacy leads married people, under somewhat similar circumstances, to elude their better halves.

Besides rustics, and those who glory in exhibit-

ing an expression of petty malice, and who, trying to look contemptuous, become contemptible, some people labor under peculiar disadvantages, in giving and receiving cuts. A snub-nose or natural contortion of the mouth under such circumstances may seem an ill-bred exhibition of spite; and short-sighted people who do not wear glasses must be slightly abrupt. On the contrary, the single eye-glass, adjunct of the scenic fop and object of the vulgar sneer, makes some amends to its ill-used wearer when he perpetrates a premeditated cut. The inexpressiveness of the unassisted, the glassy stare of the assisted eye, coupled with a steadying of the facial nerves and a general air of superciliousness, envenom the wound of this vitreous weapon, and render it the most effective, gorgon-like, icy, and apparently "the most unkindest cut of all."



## THE LOGIC OF SLOTH.\*

IF our ideas originate in reflection as well as in sensation, our earliest morning thoughts are, like those of our childhood, generally drawn from the latter source. Unless lately the winners or recipients of rare good fortune, or suffering from the more poignant ills that flesh is heir to, our first waking impression is one of soul-absorbing physical repose. Like lotos-eaters, we linger in the soft contentment of the present, till the evanescence of human enjoyment dawns ungratefully on our increasing consciousness, phantoms of troubles and obligations loom before the brain, and a struggle, from which the resolute only are exempt, ensues between interest and inclination. Perhaps the most common and efficient argument of the bland usurper, sloth, is what may be called the fallacy of accumulation—the same that regulates the expenditures of the spendthrift, and makes procrastination such a very successful thief. We claim, generally with apparent reason, that “another five min-

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\* From “The Round Table.”

utes is immaterial," and forget that after the easily conceded period the argument will probably be just as conclusive as before. Indeed, this fallacy is specially dangerous between the sheets. Should there flash before the vacillating sluggard a vague and troublous conception of such a truism as that the ocean is composed of drops, or that "many a little makes a mickle," very possibly after the close of "just one moment more" he is as sweetly unconscious of the thrifty Scotch maxim in particular, as of all unpleasant facts in general. Such was his self-seductive sophistry who yearned for "*yet a little* sleep, *a little* slumber, *a little* folding of the hands to sleep." Morpheus is a logician as ready as ingenious. A collegian resolved to nerve himself against his besetting sin by a recital of the spirit-stirring passage from the *Psalm of Life* :

"Let us then *be up* and doing  
With a heart for any fate ;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and *to wait* ;"

and brooding more and more softly on the *concluding* beauties of the stanza, and waiting more and more patiently, he subsided in the arms of the insidious god. By the same persuasive influence, fixed reso-

lutions of early rising, even solemn assertions, are often nullified by the testy dignity of laziness, as superseding volition, and derogatory to the pride of intellectual, if sleepy, beings. The proverb that "the early bird catches the worm" is easily disposed of by the melancholy fact that *the early worm is caught* by the aforesaid bird. Opposed to the subtle disputant, most trains of thought lead to the same terminus, sleep; most arguments involve the same "illicit process;" and we reason in a circle that has an end in obliviousness. It may be a paradox to assert, that matutinal sloth keeps up with the age, and is armed against every innovation that threatens to molest "its ancient solitary reign." But if of yore determined sluggards shut their ears to the cock's shrill clarion or the echoing horn, and other sounds of a less advanced civilization, so the rush of the steam-engine, the shriek of the whistle, and the droning of barrel-organs are equally ineffectual to rouse them. Perhaps it is that such discords are not exclusively of the morning, but last all day if not all night; perhaps it is that every unheeded warning weakens the voice of conscience.

It may seem hard that our hours of repose should be also dedicated to feline loves and wars; it *is* hard, when nocturnal caterwaulings are finally lulled, and

blood-thirsty mosquitoes have ceased to trouble, that we cannot be at rest. But we should bow to the immutable though strange arrangement. The statistics of longevity offer us a fair chance of a long and healthy life by so doing, and a well-known adage assures us of wealth and wisdom in addition. But how are the irresolute to persevere in the arduous duty, and the lazy to conquer their besetting sin? At a time when our higher impulses are commonly rather dull, the most generally effective *logical* weapon to oppose to laziness is the *argumentum ad crumenam*; though idlers would save their clothes by staying in bed, and we have heard of a man selling his last suit and keeping to the blankets in secure defiance of a modest and checkmated landlady. Other *argumenta ad hominem* may be equally or more powerful with certain temperaments. Thus, the savor of a favorite dish, coupled with the reflection that it was probably growing cold, nay, even being consumed, has effectually wakened many and stirred them into rapid action; while the spectre of a sallow complexion forces many a fair and willing captive from the thralldom of sloth. But where the allegiance is undivided, Somnus is a ruler sufficiently despotic, and a diplomat wily enough to evade the most cogent arguments; nor will solemn oaths always serve to reform

his insensate votaries. Temperance pledges may be efficacious—Bacchus is a lover of truth ; but, like Cupid, the drowsy god will smile at perjuries. In hardened cases we would rather prescribe some pre-arranged contrivance unsusceptible of capricious change, and such as might stir some ruling principle of action or jar against the sensibilities of the individual under treatment. For example, Horace's cure for lethargy might be happily tried by the friends of the miserly *fainéant* ; for the timid, the sword of Damocles, suspended from the ceiling half an hour before breakfast, would be a suitable device ; and the musical sloth might be awakened slowly and sadly by the wailing of a bagpipe, or roused by infant howls to sudden animation, not without a vivid appreciation for Herod and Mme. R——l. But let the trusty servant, who persists in repeating and, *splendide mendax*, in misstating the hour, be long-suffering and meek : let the solicitous or funny friend, who gently applies the water-cure, be swift and wary. For in truth a sluggard roused vies in fury with a woman scorned, and is no distinguisher or respecter of persons. Indeed, Lord Bacon's list of deceptive appearances, the sources of human error, is deplorably incomplete ; for to his Idols of the Tribe, the Den, the Theatre, and the Market-place,

he should have added, if not prefixed the Idols of the Bed. We base this opinion on a very extensive induction, embracing instances of courteous sluggards swearing at the fair sex; of constructive sluggards smashing inanimate alarm clocks; of bashful sluggards in their night-clothes urging the pursuit of their disturber; of forgiving sluggards vowing eternal enmity; and of sluggards in general letting their angry passions rise, and shocking the manes of Dr. Watts.

## AUTOPIIOTOGRAPHS.

THE following leaves from imaginary "Mental Photograph Albums," supposed to be the self-drawn characters of Fisk, Greeley, and Grant, appeared respectively in the New York "Tribune," "Commercial Advertiser," and "Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper." Mr. Fisk's caricature, it need hardly be remarked, was first published prior to his decease, and the last two during the height of the Presidential campaign of 1872. The author neither vouches for nor believes many of the insinuations to be found in the subjoined squibs, of which the last two were only designed to travesty the unseemly and unscrupulous style of political warfare adopted by some journals.

## AUTOPIIOTOGRAPH OF JAMES FISK, JR.

What is your favorite color? *Rouge et noir.*

What is your favorite flower? *Wild thyme.*

What is your favorite tree? *Rum shrub.*

What is your favorite object in nature? *Bull rushes on the Bank.*

What is your favorite season of the year? The month of *March.*

What is your favorite gem? Jem Fisk.

What is your favorite style of beauty? "The loveliness ever in motion that *plays.*"

Who is your favorite architect? In-I-go Jones.

Who is your favorite painter? Phiz.

Who is your favorite musician? Max Maretzek.

What is your favorite piece of sculpture? An "animated *bust.*"

Who is your favorite poet? Dr. Watts.

Who is your favorite prose author? Old *Burton.*

Who is your favorite character in romance? "*Black Friday.*"

What is your favorite book to take up for an hour? "The Sad History of Greedy Jem."

What book (not religious) would you part with last? "Treasure-Trove."

What epoch would you choose to have lived in? The age of the Golden *Fleece.*

Where would you like to live? In "the Gardens of *Gul.*"

What is your favorite amusement? Reflection (in the mirror).



What is your favorite occupation? *Chiseling.*

If not yourself who would you choose to be?  
Brigham Young.

What is your idea of happiness? "Oh! that this too, too solid flesh would melt!"

What is your idea of misery? "Water, water everywhere, and not a drop of drink!"

What is your *bête noire*? A curtain lecture.

What is your dream? "A Dream of Fair Women."

What is your favorite game? The Eric stockholders.

What do you consider your distinguishing characteristic? Modesty.

What is the sublimest passion of which human nature is capable? Love for our enemies' wives.

What are the sweetest words in the world? "Not Guilty."

What are the saddest? "Gone where the woodbine twineth."

What is your aim in life? To encourage the *legitimate* drama.

What is your motto? 'Tis as well to be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.

U. S. G.'S MENTAL PHOTOGRAPH.

What is your favorite color? Claret.

What is your favorite flower? A toddy-blossom.

What is your favorite tree? A whiffle-tree.

What is your favorite object in nature? A "stone fence."

What is your favorite letter? "The *absent T*."

What is your favorite season of the year? The *present* season.

What is your favorite perfume? Jockey Club.

What is your favorite wine? *Mumm*.

What is your favorite style of beauty? A bull-pup.

What are your favorite names? *Tom* and *Ferry*.

Who is your favorite painter? Tommy Nast.

Who are your favorite musicians. Harpers.

What is your favorite instrument? The pipe.

Who is your favorite poet? *Longfellow*.

Who is your favorite prose author? *More*.

Who is your favorite character in romance? Cigarette.

Who are your favorite characters in history? The last of the *Bourbons*.

What is your favorite book to take up for an hour? *Job* (when fat).

What book (not religious) would you part with last? "Hard Cash."

What age would you choose to live in? *Pill*-age.

Where would you like to live? In a palace or a cellar (wine).

What is your favorite amusement? Travelling (*on a free pass*).

What is your favorite occupation? Raking (*in*).

What trait of character do you most admire in man? Generosity.

What trait of character do you most admire in woman? Liberality.

What trait of character do you most detest in each? Sponging.

If not yourself, who would you rather be? The *next* President of the United States.

What is your idea of happiness? Four Aces against four Kings.

What is your idea of misery? Four Kings against four Aces.

What is your dream? ULYSSES I., DEI GRATIA AMER. IMP.

What is your favorite game? Grab.

What do you believe to be your distinguishing characteristics? A *dogged* and *stable* disposition.

What is the sublimest passion of which human

nature is capable? Love for our enemies—*before the election.*

What are the sweetest words in the world? "All that I have is thine."

What are the saddest words? "It was my last cigar."

What is your aim in life? To be the most *gifted* man of the age.

What is your motto? "To him that hath, shall be given."

AUTOPIOTOGRAPH OF H. G.

What is your favorite color? The *pink* of elegance.

What is your favorite flower? *Graham flour.*

What is your favorite tree? *Treason.*

What is your favorite object in nature? A snake *lying* in "The Sun."

What is your favorite season of the year? The Lecture season.

What is your favorite perfume? An odor of sanctity.

What is your favorite song? "Woodman, spare that tree."

What is your favorite style of beauty? A white hat: *H. G.'s tile of beauty.*

What is your favorite name for a man? *Pat* (on the back).

What is your favorite name for a woman? *Fan* (the Greeley).

What are your favorite musicians? *Trumpeters* and *drummers*.

What are your favorite instruments? *Brazen* and *Rcid*.

Who is your favorite painter? *Turner*.

Who is your favorite poet? Horace (the Roman).

Who is your favorite prose author? Horace (the rum 'un).

Who is your favorite character in romance? The *Genius* of the *Ring*.

Who is your favorite character in history? Jeff. Davis.

What is your favorite book to take up for an hour? "Under Two Flags."

What book (not religious) would you part with last? "Recollections of a Busybody."

What is your favorite amusement? Fishing for *plaice*.

What trait of character do you most admire in man? Consistency.

What trait of character do you most admire in woman? Free love.

What trait of character do you most detest in both? A tendency to *cursory* remarks.

If not yourself, who would you rather be? Grant—"If I were not Diogenes, I would be Alexander?"

What is your idea of happiness? A country where there is no ail or bier: a land of departed spirits.

What is your idea of misery? A fall between two stools.

What is your dream? "I dreamed that I dwelt in marble halls."

What is your favorite game? The American public.

What do you believe to be your distinguishing characteristic? A love of *plants*—especially the *beats* of Cincinnati and the *sage* of Chappaqua.

What is the sublimest passion of which human nature is capable? "Clasping hands across a bloody chasm."

What are the sweetest words in "The World?" "Anything to beat Grant."

What are the saddest words in the world? "Friend after friend departs."

What is your aim in life? To raise the standard of *Duty* (on imported products).

What is your motto? "Put yourself in his place."

EMPHASIS AS A VEHICLE OF  
MALICE.\*

THE late Madame Alice Prépense, cruelly nicknamed Malice Prepense, was one of the most interesting women I ever knew. Her outspoken and ingenuous method of vindicating her absent friends from the slanders of their maligners was a cause of wonder and admiration. And it was noticeable that there were few victims of scandal within her circle who were *not* her friends. In fact, no sooner did any one smart under the tooth of envy than she enlisted in his service and hastened to the rescue. Such was her zeal in championing injured innocents, that she was invariably "posted" upon the latest slander a few hours after its inception. Like the late Mr. Greeley, she loved to "nail a lie:" and she has been known to contradict several before they were uttered. She evidently thought prevention better than cure. That her advocacy was always judicious

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\* *Republished, with one additional incident, from the N. Y. "Ledger."*

has been questioned by some cynics, but no one could deny that it was warm and spontaneous.

About this time three years ago, I entered her cosy little reception-room one afternoon, and found her apparently struggling with suppressed emotion. It was the day after the unpleasantness in the Church of the Chosen, when the Rev. Dr. Goodfellow was accused of trifling with the affections of Miss Mainchance, daughter of the leading trustee.

"Oh, Mr. —," exclaimed my hostess, "can *you* believe those dreadful things about poor Dr. Goodfellow? I'm sure if he *was* heard calling her his dearest Jane, he was only quoting the song. You know he *was* so fond of talking poetry to her. And then as to his telling Mr. Mainchance that he hoped to make her his own, why of course he merely implied to take her into his *fold*."

Smiling at the strange blending of stress and distress in the intonation of Madame, I observed that the Doctor had denied using the expression attributed to him either literally or metaphorically. I added that the venomous stories of a few Pharisees, who wanted a pastor more after their own stripe, could never make me suspect Dr. Goodfellow of such frivolity.

"Ah!" cried Madame Prépanse, "the very senti-



ment I just expressed to Mrs. Brown, when she called him a young Lothario! 'My dear Mrs. Brown,' said I, 'you might bring the whole congregation to reason with me consecutively, but you never could persuade me that he was a *young* Lothario.' "

The said Mrs. Brown, to judge from her subsequent conversation, went home impressed with two new ideas—that the parson's parishioners believed in his guilt, and that that guilt was enhanced by his age.

"Apropos of Mrs. Brown," Madame presently resumed, "I can't imagine how Sophia Atkinson can go prying into her connubial relations. What on earth is it to Sophy if Mr. Brown did propose for his wife only to spite her sister who jilted him? That, I suppose, must be what Sophy is trying to find out. Did *they* go talking about *her* when Col. Jenkins went to Europe for his *health* and *stayed there*, after visiting her for ever so many months? And the Browns have always been so kind to her. I recollect Mrs. Brown quite agreed with me that there *was not a word of truth* in that horrible story about Sophy's uncle."

"What story?" I inquired, somewhat anxiously, for I had hitherto rather esteemed the gentleman in question.

"Why, that he had actually married *that Creole* in the West Indies."

"But in Heaven's name!" I exclaimed, "what woman do you allude to?"

"Oh, you don't know, then—to be sure, you were South at the time; and they did hush up the report so suddenly. If I'd only recollected, I shouldn't have said a word about it. Far be it from me," she added, fearing that I was about to press the question, "to aid in propagating ill-natured gossip—especially as you are a friend of his."

With a sense of misplaced confidence I made my adieux.

Shortly afterward Madame Prépense had a great misfortune, as she herself asseverated. In emphatically contradicting a scandal (which her usual vigilance had scented in advance of her neighbors) in the same distinct terms on four separate occasions, she was yet the unconscious cause, she lamented to say, of starting four different versions of the story. This happened the day after the second great bond robbery of the Implicit Trust and Banking Co., about which there was so much mystery. Prior to the first robbery the president, William O. Cipher, had appointed his eldest son John to a vacant clerkship in the bank.

Madame took care to be at home that day. The Ciphers were friends of her friends; and, as she observed, she was not the woman to *go about* disseminating mischief. Four ladies happened to call separately in the forenoon. I shall call them Numbers One, Two, Three, and Four.

Number One was not slow in introducing the absorbing topic.

"Oh!" interrupted Mr. —, "please don't ask me to talk of that. *I can be convinced* that John Cipher stole those bonds."

After a short visit Number One withdrew to circulate a rumor that almost every one thought young Mr. Cipher the delinquent.

Number Two, when she alluded to the same subject, was also cut short by Madame.

"My dear Mrs. —," said the latter, "you know I dislike scandal; and, besides, I'm sure it was not *John* Cipher that stole those bonds."

Exit Number Two, persuaded that *old* Mr. Cipher was the man.

Number Three, an old but not ill-natured news-monger, in answer to an inquiry of hers, was informed by Madame, with an air of commiseration, that she did "not think John Cipher *stole* those bonds." Number Three went out and told her friends that

that poor young man had always meant to return the bonds, but was prevented by a strange series of misfortunes, etc.

Number Four had quite another story to tell. To her Madame had expressed her conviction that "Mr. Cipher did not steal *those* bonds ;" and Number Four had left with the impression that he *did* steal the ones which had disappeared on the former occasion.

I understand that my departed friend, on the same day, stated to a fifth caller her italicized belief that the aspersed gentleman "did not steal the *bonds* ;" exciting thereby a vague suspicion in her visitor that Cipher did steal, or was capable of stealing something else. Luckily Number Five was not given to acting upon vague suspicions.

A Mr. Jones, a neighbor of ours, had a young, fond, and impulsive wife. This lady once undertook to beard Madame, and charge her with defaming her husband's character. "My dear Mrs. Jones," cried that indignant matron, "if we had been better acquainted, you would have known that I never utter an ill-natured remark unless it be to contradict it. It is true that somebody did observe in my hearing that your husband was 'more knave than fool,' and I emphatically denied the insinuation, word for word."

"Ah!" said the implacable wife, "I know what you meant by your emphasis; you meant to reflect upon my husband's intellect."

"I assure you I never thought of it; but if any well-meant remark of mine has made *other people reflect upon it*, and if it is so unpleasant a subject, I'm sure I am very sorry."

This sadly misinterpreted woman was not even appreciated by her family tradespeople. A sulky old butcher once wanted to bring an action against her for saying at an old maid's tea that "she never thought he sold horseflesh for *mutton*." This, he complained, had injured his business as much as if she had libelled him in the papers. But she made the *amende*, and professed herself perfectly willing to retract the statement, which, I am sorry to say, was far from satisfying this unreasonable knight of the shambles. The grocer, who waxed wroth with her for affirming her belief that "he didn't mix pork fat with his butter *himself*," got about equal satisfaction; for she magnanimously offered to admit, for the sake of peace, that he did perform the mixture in person.

Poor Madame! she was an infallible antidote to egotism—no one in her presence wanted to turn the conversation on himself.

## EUPHEMISMS.\*

THE employment of euphemisms among the ancients was usually generated by a peculiar motive, now almost inoperative. The use of harsh or disagreeable epithets was considered inauspicious when applied to malignant supernatural agents or things connected therewith. Thus the Greeks sought to avoid the wrath of the *Furies* and the threatening presages of *left-hand* phenomena by the most soothing expressions. This classical notion still lingers in some rural districts of the Old World; and we have heard an old Scotchwoman object to an innocent remark about the devil on the ground that it was "nae gude to speak of sic like." Even in New York city certain people of "refinement" shudder at the mention of Hell-gate, and always refer to that dangerous passage by the more "elegant" title of *Hurl-gate*. More frequent traces of the tendency alluded to remained among the peasantry of the

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\* *Republished, with many additions, from "The Round Table."*

Middle Ages. Hence, probably, the appellations *good-folk* and *fairies* as applied to whimsical and often mischievous elves; and it is just possible that the sobriquet of "The Old Gentleman" may have been designed as a sop for Cerberus.

But with us moderns euphemisms more commonly serve to dress wolves in sheep's clothing, or silence the qualms of quaint, old-fashioned consciences. The *argot*, or cant of professional thieves, from which examples of this figure are often quoted, was originated merely as a medium of secret communication, and not to act as a narcotic to a moral sense already dormant or defunct. This artificial dialect, so far as it is borrowed from our vernacular or from other intelligible sources, seems to include as many of those terms that enhance as of those that extenuate, to an unprofessional mind, the crimes or horrors they express—proving thereby to outsiders that, if there be honor among thieves, there is very little conscience. Many even of their euphemistic phrases, such as the "everlasting staircase," otherwise "the hopper," for the treadmill, and "a dance upon nothing" for an execution, are better adapted to remove fear than moral scruples. But amateur transgressors, like Pistol, who called stealing "to convey," avail themselves of this *façon de parler* more particularly as an

antidote against inconvenient conscientiousness. Thus the slang of many schoolboys betrays a very confused discrimination between the *meum* and *tuum*. With them to "prig," to "crib," to "bone" or to "bag" contains little or no unpleasant suggestion of injustice or dishonor. Drunkenness conceals its various phases under a variety of figurative expressions, including "half-seas-over," "jolly screwed," and "tight"—an epithet most frequently applied to loose characters. The same tendency is further evidenced in such seductive phrases as "*parfait amour*," "Cream of the Valley" gin, "taking a smile," Hibernice "a drop of the crathur;" though perhaps it cannot be strictly called a euphemism which does not veil something essentially wrong, coarse or disagreeable. Among the verbal courtesies prevalent in Western bar-rooms is one of a wholly different and seemingly more deterrent character. Immediately before taking a drink, when the English bibber ceremoniously "looks toward you," and the New York tippler wishes you luck, we understand that the Western "drinkist" very usually remarks, "Here goes another nail in the coffin!" The highly metaphorical language in which the reporters of *Bell's Life in London* and the sporting papers delighted to cloak the barbarities of a "rattling mill," has



contributed to prolong the existence of the "P.R." until it has become an anachronism. By the aid of this typical and entertaining slang the fistic art would probably have still possessed the popular sympathy and the patronage of a few well-meaning gentlemen, if the traditional pluck and straightforward dealing of pugilists had not wholly deserted our modern bruisers, whose backers, umpires, patrons and hangers-on are, with hardly an exception, either gamblers or thieves. "To tap the claret," or "draw the ruby," "to send to grass" or "on a visit to his mother," "to let out the left mawley," "to close the right peeper," to pay attention to the "potato-trap" the "bread-basket," or the "snorter," are terms which are either imaginative or grotesque, and have a flavor of sport and humor. "To counter on the *brain-pan*," even conveys a soothing, if ungrounded, compliment to the wounded boxer. And the image presented by such phrases becomes still less formidable when these frolics are performed by such harmless creatures as the Birmingham "Pet," the New York "Novice," the Chicago "Chicken," the Benicia "Boy," or the Irish "Infant."

It has been observed that the misuse of "play" as a synonym for gambling has gone far toward the toleration and diffusion of that practice; and the

sporting terms "gamboling on the green" and "fighting the tiger" contribute, though less powerfully, to the same result. With similar effect Germans use the word *tempeln* (to build a temple), a rather suggestive substitute for playing faro. In many cases too, it is the studied abuse of the term *love* instead of lust or passion, and of *flirtation* where coarse familiarity would be a more fitting expression, that gives success to the seducer; and the playful phrase, *poudre de succession*, which was once current in France, has perhaps more than once nerved a vacillating poisoner, or even made him, like De Quincey's connoisseur, regard murder as one of the fine arts. Contracted or disguised oaths may be viewed as euphemisms, that retain the efficacy of their originals as soothing syrups for the irritated feelings, while agreeing better with the moral constitution. Some of these have a further advantage for the etymologist, allowing him the free use of expletives without at all compromising his dignity before the majority of his hearers. Most people, for instance, are ignorant that the grotesque "odds bodikins," is corrupted from *God's body*, as "'zounds" is from *God's wounds*, or that, whoever uses the unconnubial and antiquated "marry," swears, at least objectively, by the Virgin Mary. If the vulgar "darn" is a rather more trans-

parent incognito of its profane original, it has a merit of its own, that, while professing an insincere desire that we may be mended, it really consigns us to a place where such a consummation is quite impossible. The Irish malediction, "bad 'cess to you!" is just as thinly veiled. This widespread yearning to secure the pleasures without the pains of profanity appears also in the suppression of the name of the Deity in the once popular "'slife" and "'sdeath," and its corruption in "egad," or the colloquial "So help me Bob," as well as in the Shaksperian expletives "by Gis" and "by Chrish." In the examination of such pitiful shifts and hypocrisies we must console ourselves with the borrowed reflection that they are so many acts of "the homage paid by vice to virtue."

Of certain euphemisms a moral eclipse is less the object than the cause, as when the terms *silly*, *simpletons* or *innocents*—all strictly and originally expressive of goodness—were first applied to fools; when stupefied toppers were first irreverently said to be "maudlin," or like the Weeping *Magdelene*, as she is commonly depicted; or when "smartness" becomes a synonym for successful swindling.

Delicacy, genuine and spurious, is a prolific source of analogous expressions. Thus, in relation to those

frail and outlawed females not to be even thought of in unvarnished Anglo-Saxon, what a variety of pleasantly-sounding foreign terms—lorettes, Aspasias, traviatas, the demi-monde—spare the modesty of the newspaper correspondent and the ingenuous blushes of the curious reader! Such illusive paraphrases as “gay women,” “filles de joie,” and “pretty horse-breakers,” are part of the hollow radiance that surrounds the unforgiven sin, and is the ruin of so many human moths of either sex. The Latin “conciliatrix” must have been much more agreeable to the creature denoted by it than its uncompromising English translations. Perhaps the most odious and demoralizing euphemisms—which are happily becoming somewhat more rare in this country—are those which evade the use of a common word or phrase, in itself pure and harmless, merely because it may possibly convey a foul idea to an impure mind. Of course the evil ceases when the euphemistic substitute, as is rarely the case, has been universally adopted; but while it is being forced into use and is struggling for existence, each repetition of the unaccustomed word must remind even the most innocent of the *reason* of its novel usage, and, consequently, of the very thing which it is purposed to banish from our thoughts. The vulgar ori-

ginators, of such nauseous innovations really insult their listeners, by inferring the likelihood of their attaching a base and uncommon meaning to a term having also a pure and common meaning, when that term is clearly intended to be understood in the latter sense. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

The misuse of the words "gentleman" and "lady," so often assumed by or soothingly addressed to the most degraded classes, is a striking specimen of the euphemisms that are prompted by courtesy. We are not without some misgivings lest "the man in the moon" or "the man at the wheel" may prefer successful claims to gentility; though it might seem that this specific tendency had reached its *ne plus ultra* when four families occupying the corners of one room assured a pitying visitor that they had been pretty comfortable "till the *gentleman* in the middle took a lodger!" "Belle-mère," to express a generally unpopular relation, is another polite misnomer, as is the "*Dear Sir*" in the missive of an indignant dun, or in the procrastinating debtor's reply, however appropriate the epithet may be in a purely commercial sense. Policemen extend further the demulcent influence of euphemisms, and politely notify malefactors that they are "wanted," occasionally even presenting them with "a pair of bracelets;"

while bailiffs describe the most urgent legal claims—sometimes much more annoying than the “law’s delay”—as “little matters.” Some similar verbal courtesies, however, are less disinterested, as when one advertises for “a valise *taken by mistake* from the S. S. Daniel Doo,” or offers a reward for the return of \$100 “*found* between the Grand and Fifth Avenue Hotels.” It is not an unselfish politeness which adds the assurance that “no questions will be asked.”

An offset to the general perversion of this figure of speech is presented in those poetical expressions designed to mitigate distress, which describe death as sleep, the dead as the departed, or parting as bidding good-by. “Hôtel Dieu” is a beautiful name for a hospital: with some such equivalent for the contemptuous “poor-house,” so many would not avoid its humiliating hospitalities by starvation or suicide. “Mont-de-piété,” too, is a pleasanter euphemism than the accommodating “uncle,” who always takes considerable *interest* in performing the duties of a kinsman.